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THE THRESHOLD OF RELIGION

THE THRESHOLD OF RELIGION

BY

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TO
M. N.

PREFACE

AT the International Congress for the History of Religions held recently in Oxford, several friends who listened to the paper on "The Conception of *Mana*," which appears fourth in the present collection, were kind enough to suggest that it ought to be published under one cover with various scattered essays wherein aspects of the same subject had previously been examined. The essays in question were: "Pre-Animistic Religion," *Folk-Lore*, June 1900, pp. 162-182; "From Spell to Prayer," *Folk-Lore*, June 1904, pp. 132-165; "Is Taboo a Negative Magic?" *Anthropological Essays, presented to Edward Burnett Tylor in honour of his 75th birthday, October 2, 1907*, pp. 219-234; and "A Sociological View of Comparative Religion," *Sociological Review*, January 1908, pp. 48-60. By the kind leave of the Editor of *Folk-Lore*, the Delegates

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of the Clarendon Press, and the Editor of the *Sociological Review*, it has been possible to proceed to the realisation of this idea, conceived as I have shown amid the fervent courtesies of a festive occasion. Now, however, that in cold blood one contemplates the accomplished deed, the doubt not unnaturally arises whether, after all, it was worth while to reprint articles that in their original form received, from experts at all events, as full and favourable an attention as their author could venture to expect.

It is true that the veteran psychologist, Wilhelm Wundt of Leipzig, has, in his important *Völkerpsychologie* (Vol. II., Pt. II., 171 *fol.*), done me the honour of associating my name with what, under the designation of *die präanimistische Hypothese*, he treats as a representative theory of the origin of religion, formulated in direct opposition to the Tylorian "animism." Had I any such ambitious doctrine to promulgate, I suppose I ought to embrace every opportunity of sowing my opinions broadcast. But, to be frank, I scarcely recognise myself in the rôle imputed to me. In the paper on "Pre-

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animistic Religion " I had no intention of committing myself to a definite solution of the genetic problem. For me the first chapter of the history of religion remains in large part indecipherable. My chief concern was simply to urge that primitive or rudimentary religion, as we actually find it amongst savage peoples, is at once a wider, and in certain respects a vaguer, thing than " the belief in spiritual beings " of Tylor's famous " minimum definition." It therefore seemed advisable to provide the working anthropologist with a new category under which he could marshal those residual phenomena which a strictly animistic interpretation of rudimentary religion would be likely to ignore, or at all events to misrepresent. Before our science ventures to dogmatise about genesis, it must, I think, push on with the preliminary work of classifying its data under synoptic headings. My essay, then, more immediately served its turn when it succeeded in introducing a new classificatory term into the vocabulary of the working anthropologist. This, I think, it can be said to have done in view of the

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use to which the word "pre-animistic" has been put by writers such as Dr Preuss, Dr Farnell, Mr Clodd, Mr Warde Fowler, Mr Hodson, and others. I take it, however, that "non-animistic" would have served most of their purposes almost as well.

At the same time it would be untrue to deny that the term "pre-animistic" was used by me designedly and with a chronological reference. What I would not be prepared to lay down dogmatically or even provisionally is merely that there was a pre-animistic *era* in the history of religion, when animism was not, and nevertheless religion of a kind existed. For all I know, some sort of animism in Tylor's sense of the word was a primary condition of the most primitive religion of mankind. But I believe that there were other conditions no less primary. Moreover, I hold that it can be shown conclusively that, in some cases, animistic interpretations have been superimposed on what previously bore a non-animistic sense.

I would go further still. I hold that religion in its psychological aspect is, funda-

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mentally, a mode of social behaviour. To emphasise this point, which scarcely receives explicit attention in the previous essays, the fifth paper of this series is appended. Now I agree with those psychologists who hold that the most deep-seated and persistent springs of social behaviour are furnished, less by our ideas, than by our emotions, taken together with the impulses that are therein manifested.¹ Thus awe, in the case of religion, will, on this view, have to be treated as a far more constant factor in religion than any particular conception of the awful. Such awe, we may therefore expect, will be none the less of marked effect on social behaviour, because the power of representing the awful under clear-cut and consistent ideal forms is relatively backward. Hence I am ready to assume that, before animism, regarded as an ideal system of religious beliefs, can have come into its kingdom, there must have been numberless

¹ I would refer especially to the recently published work of my friend, Mr William M'Dougall (*An Introduction to Social Psychology*, Methuen & Co., 1908), where this position is set forth more lucidly and plausibly than in any other psychological treatise known to me. His account of the emotions that underlie religion is especially illuminating. See 128 *fol.*, and again 302 *fol.*

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dimly-lighted impressions of the awful that owned no master in the shape of some one systematising thought. It is, I think, because Wundt mistakes my "pre-animistic religion" for a system of ideas of alleged priority to animism that he accuses me of making the evolution of thought proceed from abstract to concrete instead of the other way about. My theory is not concerned with the mere thought at work in religion, but with religion as a whole, the organic complex of thought, emotion and behaviour. In regard to religion thus understood I say, not that its evolution proceeds from abstract to concrete—which would be meaningless—, but that it proceeds from indistinct to distinct, from undifferentiated to differentiated, from incoherent to coherent. And that, I claim, is a hypothesis which has the best part of evolutionary science at its back.

I have said enough, I hope, to show that, in regard to Tylor's animism, I am no irreconcilable foe who has a rival theory to put forward concerning the origin of religion. May I now be permitted to say a word about

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the attitude adopted in my second, third and fourth papers towards the views of another great anthropologist—I mean Dr Frazer? It is more or less of a corollary from the position taken up in the first essay, that magic and religion are differentiated out from a common plasm of crude beliefs about the awful and occult. As far as Dr Frazer denies this, so far I should declare against him. If he means, for example, to exclude taboo from the sphere of religion (as he seems to do when he identifies it with a negative magic, and identifies magic in its turn with the natural science of the primitive man), then in my opinion he understands religion in so narrow a sense that, for historical purposes, his definition simply will not work. I cannot, for instance, imagine how the British Sunday is to be excluded from the sphere of British religion. On the other hand, if he would consent not to press the analogy—for surely it is hardly more—between primitive man's magic and what we know as natural science, I venture to think that his "magical" and my "pre-animistic" could be used as well-nigh

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convertible terms. Be this as it may, I would gratefully acknowledge that by far the richest collection in existence of what are for me pre-animistic phenomena is contained in that masterpiece of anthropological research, *The Golden Bough*.¹

Finally, I ought, perhaps, to say something about the criticisms that have been levelled against the principles my suggestions embody. Apart from Wundt's objections, which have already been considered and, I hope, met, they amount to very little. The flowing tide is with us. Thus the contentions of my first essay were, some time after its first appearance (it was read to the British Association in September 1899, and published in *Folk-Lore* in the course of the following year), independently reaffirmed by Mr Hewitt's important article, "*Orenda and a Definition of Religion*," in the *American Anthropologist*, N.S., Vol. IV. (1902), 33 *fol.* Again, hardly had my essay "From Spell to Prayer" seen the light in 1904, when MM.

¹ I note also that Dr Haddon, in his useful little book, *Magic and Fetishism* (A. Constable & Co., 1906), seems to find no difficulty in accepting Dr Frazer's main findings about magic, whilst at the same time endorsing my account of the psychology of the magical process.

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Hubert and Mauss published their far more systematic "Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la Magie" in *L'Année Sociologique*, Vol. VII., which no less independently reaffirmed my view of the common participation of magic and religion in notions of the *mana* type. Further, Mr Hartland has lent his great authority to this group of opinions, and has presented the whole case in the most telling fashion in his brilliant "Address to the Anthropological Section of the British Association," York, 1906—a pamphlet which is unfortunately not so accessible as could be wished. Thus on reviewing the course of recent speculation concerning rudimentary religion one is led to hope that these views have come to stay. I ought to mention, however, that Mr Lovejoy, in his interesting paper on "The Fundamental Concept of the Primitive Philosophy" in *The Monist*, Vol. XVI., No. 3, objects that in my treatment of such a notion as *mana* I tend "to put the emphasis on the wrong side," namely, on the aspect in which it stands for the supernormal rather than on that in which it stands for the efficacious.

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His own view is that the perceived energy is mysterious because it is so potent, not potent because it is mysterious in the first instance. Now I do not know that, for the purposes of general theory, I would care to emphasise either aspect at the expense of the other. It seems to me, however, that, in certain instances, at all events, say, in the case of a corpse, the awfulness is what strikes home first, the potency primarily consisting in the very fact that the dead body is able to cause such a shock to the feelings. A less friendly critic is Father Schmidt, whose terrible denunciations are even now in process of descending upon my head in the pages of his excellent periodical, *Anthropos*. On the principle, I suppose, that "he who is not with me is against me," he chooses to regard me as an enemy of true religion. I wish he would do me the honour to read my paper on "Origin and Validity in Ethics" in *Personal Idealism*, to see how, *mutatis mutandis*, I there in principle contend that the function of a psychological treatment of religion is to determine its history but not its truth. Meanwhile, the chief objection of an anthro-

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pological kind brought by him against my views is that I take no account of the presence of what Mr Lang calls "high gods" in primitive religion. Let me assure him that I have complete faith in Mr Lang's "high gods"—or in a great many of them, at all events. On the other hand, I am not at present prepared to admit (as apparently Father Schmidt would do) the postulate of a world-wide degeneration from the belief in such beings, as accounting for pre-animistic phenomena in general. On the contrary, I assume for working purposes that Mr Lang's "high gods" must have had a psychological pre-history of some kind which, if known, would connect them with vaguer and ever vaguer shapes—phantoms teeming in the penumbra of the primitive mind, and dancing about the darkling rim of the tribal fire-circle.

The upshot of these somewhat discursive considerations is that, if I am justified at all in publishing these essays, it is because they belong to a movement of anthropological thought which has for some time demanded a more permanent vehicle of expression than

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is afforded by periodical literature. Further, in view of the fact that to me personally there has been attributed in certain quarters a sweeping and even revolutionary dogmatism about religious origins, I gladly embrace the opportunity of showing, by means of this handful of gleanings and suggestions, what a small, humble and tentative affair my theory—so far as I have a theory—is.

A note on a point of fact must be added. The statement about *Ngai* on p. 12, derived from Joseph Thomson, appears to be incorrect. Mr Hollis, who is thoroughly at home with the Masai language (whereas Thomson, I believe, was not), informs me that *Eng-Ai* is a thoroughly anthropomorphic god, of much the same character as was the sky-god Zeus for the ancient world. Thomson, he thinks, must have misunderstood the Masai. They would never have alluded to his lamp, or to himself, as *Eng-Ai*. It is possible, on the other hand, that they said *e'-ng-Ai*, or *en-dōki e'-ng-Ai*, "it is of God, it is something supernatural." Mr Hollis tells me also

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that the true form of the name of the volcano which Krapf calls *Donyo Engai*, and which for years figured on the maps as *Donyo Ngai*, is *Ol-doinyo le-'ng-Ai*, the mountain of God. If it were a hill, it would be *En-doinyo e-'ng-Ai*.

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THE object of the present paper is simply to try to give relatively definite shape to the conception of a certain very primitive phase of Religion, as Religion may for anthropological purposes be understood. The conception in question will strike many, I daresay, as familiar, nay possibly as commonplace to a degree. Even so, however, I venture to think that it is one amongst several of those almost tacitly accepted commonplaces of Comparative Religion which serve at present but to "crib, cabin, and confine" the field of active and critical research. Comparative Religion is still at the classificatory stage. Its genuine votaries are almost exclusively occupied in endeavouring to find "pigeon-holes" wherein to store with some approach to orderly and distinct arrangement the vast and chaotic piles of "slips" which their observation or reading has accumulated. Now in such a case the

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tendency is always to start with quite a few pigeon-holes, and but gradually, and, as it were, grudgingly, to add to their number. On the other hand considerable division and sub-division of topics is desirable, both in the interest of specialised study, and in order to baffle and neutralise the efforts of popularisers to enlist prejudice on the side of one or another would-be synoptic version of the subject, based on some narrow and fragmentary view of the data as provided by current science. Nay, so essential is it to detach "workable" portions of the evidence for separate and detailed consideration, that it is comparatively unimportant whether the divisions at any moment recognised and adopted be capable of exact co-ordination in respect to one another, so long as each taken by itself is clearly marked and leads immediately to business. Thus in the present case I have ventured to call attention to a phase of early Religion which, I believe, only needs clearly marking off by the aid of a few technical designations, to serve as a rallying point for a quantity of facts that have hitherto largely "gone about loose." I have therefore improvised some technical terms. I have likewise roughly surveyed the ground covered by the special topic in question, with a view to showing how the facts may there

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be disposed and regimented. Choicer technical terms no doubt may easily be found. Moreover, my illustrations are certainly anything but choice, having been culled hastily from the few books nearest to hand. May I hope, however, at least to be credited with the good intention of calling the attention of anthropologists to the possibilities of a more or less disregarded theme in Comparative Religion; and may I, conversely, be acquitted of any design to dogmatise prematurely about Religious Origins because I have put forward a few experimental formulæ, on the chance of their proving useful to this or that researcher who may be in need of an odd piece of twine wherewith to tie his *scopæ dissolutæ* into a handy, if temporary, besom?

Definitions of words are always troublesome; and Religion is the most troublesome of all words to define. Now for the purposes of Anthropology at its present stage it matters less to assign exact limits to the concept to which the word in question corresponds, than to make sure that these limits are cast on such wide and generous lines, as to exclude no feature that has characterised Religion at any moment in the long course of its evolution. Suffice it, then, to presuppose that the word stands for a certain composite or concrete state of mind

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wherein various emotions and ideas are together directly provocative of action. Let it be likewise noted at the start, that these emotions and ideas are by no means always harmoniously related in the religious consciousness, and indeed perhaps can never be strictly commensurate with each other. Now for most persons, probably, the emotional side of Religion constitutes its more real, more characteristic feature. Men are, however, obliged to communicate expressly with each other on the subject of their religious experience by the way of ideas solely. Hence, if for no other reason, the ideas composing the religious state tend to overlay and outweigh the emotional element, when it comes to estimating man's religious experience taken at its widest. Thus we catch at an idea that reminds us of one belonging to an advanced creed and say, Here is Religion; or, if there be found no clear-cut palpable idea we are apt to say, There is no Religion here; but whether the subtle thrill of what we know in ourselves as religious emotion be present there or no, we rarely have the mindfulness or patience to inquire, simply because this far more delicate criterion is hard to formulate in thought and even harder to apply to fact.

Now the object of this paper is to grope about

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amongst the roots of those beliefs and practices that at a certain stage of their development have usually been treated as forming a single growth which is labelled Animism, or more properly Animistic Religion. It is a region hard to explore, because the notions that haunt it are vague and impalpable; the religious sense (if such it may be called) manifesting itself in almost unideated feelings that doubtless fall to a large extent outside the savage "field of attention," and at anyrate fall wholly outside our field of direct observation. Now, even where there undeniably do exist precise ideas of the savage mind for Anthropology to grasp and garner, everyone is aware how exceedingly difficult it is to do them justice. How much more difficult, therefore, must it be, in the case of the earliest dim heart-stirrings and fancies of the race, to truthfully preserve the indistinctness of the original, and yet make clear the nature of that germinal source whence our own complex beliefs and aspirations must be supposed to have arisen.

Animism, as a technical term applied to Religion, calls attention to the presence of a more or less definite creed or body of ideas. According to Dr Tylor, who presented it to Anthropology, it signifies "the belief in the existence of Spiritual

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Beings,"¹ that is to say, of "spirits" in the wide sense that includes "souls." A looser use of the word by some writers, whereby it is made to cover the various manifestations of what is commonly but cumbrously styled the "anthropomorphic" tendency of savage thought, will here be ignored, and a fresh expression substituted, seeing that such an extension of its meaning robs the term of its exacter and more convenient connotation, and, further, seeing that it has failed to win general recognition from men of science.

No anthropologist, of course, has ever supposed himself able fully and finally to explain the origin of the belief in souls and spirits. Indeed, with regard to absolute origins of all kinds we had best say at once with the philosopher that "Nothing is strictly original save in the sense that everything is." Dr Tylor and others, however, have with great plausibility put forward a view as to the specifically formative source of the idea, in what has been nicknamed "the dream-theory." This theory asserts that the prototype of soul and spirit is to be sought especially in the dream-image and trance-image—that vision of the night or day that comes to a man clothed distinctively in what Dr Tylor describes as "vaporous materiality," or,

¹ *Prim. Cult.* (3rd edition), i., 424.

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as the Greenland *angekok* puts it, "pale and soft so that if a man try to grasp it he feels nothing"—*par levibus ventis volucrique simillima somno*. Perhaps it is only due to Mr Lang's latest researches¹ to say with regard to this theory that its centre of gravity, so to speak, has of late shown signs of shifting from dream to trance, so that "the hallucination-theory" might possibly now prove the more appropriate descriptive title. I shall not, however, pause to inquire whether the "thrill" of ghost-seeing is likely to have given form and character to the religious emotions of the savage more directly or forcibly than the less unfamiliar, yet more kindly and sympathetic, appearance of "dream-faces"; nor, again, whether the practical proofs, as they may be called, of Spiritualism (which after all is but another name for Animism),² I mean clairvoyance and the like, were brought into earlier or greater prominence by normal dreamers or by abnormal "seers." It is enough for my present purpose to assume that Animism, the belief in the existence of visionary shapes, whether of the dead or *sui juris*, became with the savage, at a certain stage of his development, the typical, nay almost the universal, means

¹ *The Making of Religion*, Longmans, Green & Co., 1898.

² *Prim. Cult.*, i., 426.

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of clothing the facts of his religious experience in ideas and words, and the typical and all but universal theory on which he based his religious practice. And this being assumed, we reach our special problem: Before, or at anyrate apart from, Animism, was early man subject to any experience, whether in the form of feeling, or of thought, or of both combined, that might be termed specifically "religious"?

Let us begin by asking ourselves what was the precise ground originally covered by animistic belief. The answer, if purely tentative, is soon made. The savage as we know him to-day believes in an infinitely miscellaneous collection of spiritual entities. "To whom are you praying?" asked Hale of a Sakai chief at one of those fruit festivals so characteristic of the Malay peninsula. "To the *Hantus* (spirits)," he replied—"the *Hantus* of the forest, of the mountains, of the rivers, the *Hantus* of the Sakai chiefs who are dead, the *Hantus* of head-ache and stomach-ache, the *Hantus* that make people gamble and smoke opium, the *Hantus* that send disputes, and the *Hantus* that send mosquitoes."¹ Now are all these *Hantus*, animistically speaking, on a par, or are some original, others derived? I take it that I am at one with

¹ *J. A. I.*, xv., 300-1.

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most orthodox upholders of Animism in supposing the *Hantus* of the dead to be the original *animæ* whence the rest have derived their distinctively animistic, that is to say ghostly, characteristics. For this view it will perhaps be enough to allege a single reason. The *revenant* of dream and hallucination in its actual appearance to the senses presents so exactly and completely the type to which every spirit, however indirect its methods of self-manifestation, is believed and asserted to conform, that I am personally content to regard this conclusion as one amongst the few relative certainties which Anthropology can claim to have established in the way of theory. Suppose this granted, then we find ourselves confronted with the following important train of questions, yielding us a definite nucleus and rallying-point for our present inquiry: "How came an animistic colour to be attached to a number of things not primarily or obviously connected with death and the dead? What inherent general character of their own suggested to man's mind the grouping together of the multifarious classes of so-called 'spiritual' phenomena as capable of common explanation? Was not this common explanation the outcome of a common regard, a common and yet highly specific feeling or emotion? And is not this

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feeling related to the ideas wherein it finds as it were symbolical expression—as for example to the animistic idea—as something universal and fixed to something particular and transitory? ”

Now by way of answer to these questions, let me repeat, I have no brand-new theory to propound. The doctrine that I now wish to formulate unambiguously, and at the same time, so far as may be possible within the limits of a short article, to supply with a basis of illustrative fact, is one that in a vague and general form constitutes a sort of commonplace with writers on Religious Origins. These writers for the most part profess, though not always in very plain or positive terms, to discern beneath the fluctuating details of its efforts at self-interpretation, a certain Religious Sense, or, as many would call it, Instinct, whereof the component “ moments ” are Fear, Admiration, Wonder, and the like, whilst its object is, broadly speaking, the Supernatural. Now that this is roughly and generally true no one, I think, is likely to deny. Thus, to put the matter as broadly as possible, whether we hold with one extreme school that there exists a specific religious instinct, or whether we prefer to say with the other that man’s religious creeds are a by-product of his intellectual development, we must, I think, in

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any case admit the fact that in response to, or at anyrate in connection with, the emotions of Awe, Wonder, and the like, wherein feeling would seem for the time being to have outstripped the power of "natural," that is reasonable, explanation, there arises in the region of human thought a powerful impulse to objectify and even personify the mysterious or "supernatural" something felt, and in the region of will a corresponding impulse to render it innocuous, or better still propitious, by force of constraint, communion, or conciliation. *Supernaturalism*, then, as this universal feeling taken at its widest and barest may be called, might, as such, be expected to prove not only logically but also in some sense chronologically prior to Animism, constituting as the latter does but a particular ideal embodiment of the former.

The appeal to fact that will occupy the rest of this paper, cursory though it must be in view of our space conditions, will suffice, I hope, to settle the matter. First, let us remind ourselves by the help of one or two typical quotations how widely and indiscriminately Supernaturalism casts its net. Thus Ellis writes of the Malagasy: "Whatever is great, whatever exceeds the capacity of their understandings, they designate by the one convenient and comprehensive appellation,

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Andriamanitra. Whatever is new and useful and extraordinary is called god. Silk is considered as god in the highest degree, the superlative adjective being added to the noun—*Andriamanitra-indrinda*. Rice, money, thunder and lightning, and earthquake are all called god. Their ancestors and a deceased sovereign they designate in the same manner. *Tarantasy* or book they call god, from its wonderful capacity of speaking by merely looking at it. Velvet is called by the singular epithet, 'son of god.'"¹ So too of the Masai, though far lower than the Malagasy in the scale of culture, the account given by Joseph Thomson is precisely similar. "Their conception of the deity," he says, "seems marvellously vague. I was *Ngai*. My lamp was *Ngai*. *Ngai* was in the steaming holes. His house was in the eternal snows of Kilimanjaro. In fact, whatever struck them as strange or incomprehensible, that they at once assumed had some connection with *Ngai*."² As I have said, such quotations are typical and might be multiplied indefinitely. *Andriamanitra* and *Ngai* reappear in the *Wakan* of the North American Indian, the *Mana* of the Melanesian, the *Kalou* of the Fijian, and so on. It is the common

¹ Ellis, *Hist. of Madagascar*, i., 391-2.

² Thomson, *Masailand*, 445. But see Preface *ad fin*.

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element in ghosts and gods, in the magical and the mystical, the supernal and the infernal, the unknown within and the unknown without. It is the Supernatural or Supernormal, as distinguished from the Natural or Normal; that in short which, as Mr Jevons phrases it, "defeats reasonable expectation." Or perhaps another and a better way of putting it, seeing that it calls attention to the feeling behind the logic, is to say that it is the Awful, and that everything wherein or whereby it manifests itself is, so to speak, a Power of Awfulness, or, more shortly, a Power (though this, like any other of our verbal equivalents, cannot but fail to preserve the vagueness of the original notion).¹ Of all English words Awe is, I think, the one that expresses the fundamental Religious Feeling most nearly. Awe is not the same thing as "pure funk." "*Primus in orbe deos fecit timor*" is only true if we admit Wonder, Admiration, Interest, Respect, even Love perhaps, to be, no less than Fear, essential constituents of this elemental mood.

Now ghosts and spirits are undoubtedly Powers, but it does not follow that all Powers are ghosts and spirits, even if they tend to become so. In

¹ The Greek word that comes nearest to "Power" as used above is *Tépas*. Perhaps "Teratism" may be preferred as a designation for that attitude of mind which I have termed "Supernaturalism."

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what follows I propose that we examine a few typical cases of Powers, which, beneath the animistic colour that in the course of time has more or less completely overlaid them, show traces of having once of their own right possessed pre-animistic validity as objects and occasions of man's religious feeling.

Let us start with some cases that, pertaining as they do to the "Unknown Without" as it appears in most direct contradistinction to the "Unknown Within," are thus farthest removed from the proper domain and parent-soil of Animism, and may therefore be supposed to have suffered its influences least. What we call "physical nature" may very well be "nature" also to the savage in most of its normal aspects; yet its more startling manifestations, thunderstorms, eclipses, eruptions, and the like, are eminently calculated to awake in him an Awe that I believe to be specifically religious both in its essence and in its fruits, whether Animism have, or have not, succeeded in imposing its distinctive colour upon it. Thus, when a thunderstorm is seen approaching in South Africa, a Kaffir village, led by its medicine-man, will rush to the nearest hill and yell at the hurricane to divert it from its course.¹ Here we have Awe

¹ Macdonald, *J. A. I.*, xix., 283.

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finding vent in what on the face of it may be no more than a simple straightforward act of personification. It is Animism in the loose sense of some writers, or, as I propose to call it, *Animatism*; but it is *not* Animism in the strict scientific sense that implies the attribution, not merely of personality and will, but of "soul" or "spirit," to the storm. The next case is but slightly different. The Point Barrow natives, believing the Aurora Borealis to do them harm by striking them at the back of the neck, brandish knives and throw filth at it to drive it away.¹ Now I doubt if we need suppose Animism to be latent here any more than in the African example. Nevertheless the association of the Aurora's banefulness with a particular malady would naturally pave the way towards it, whilst the precautionary measures are exactly such as would be used against spirits. The following case is more dubious. When a glacier in Alaska threatened to swallow up a valuable fishing stream, two slaves were killed in order to bring it to a standstill.² Here the advanced character of the propitiatory rite probably presumes acquaintance with some form of the animistic theory. It may very well be, however, that sacrifice is here

¹ Murdoch, *Point Barrow Expedition*, 432.

² Peet, *Am. Antiq.*, ix., 327; an instance, however, that might be better authenticated.

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resorted to as a general religious panacea without involving any distinct recognition of a particular glacier spirit. And now let us take a couple of instances where the theory behind the religious observance is more explicit. The Fuegians abstain from killing young ducks on the ground that, if they do, "Rain come down, snow come down, hail come down, wind blow, blow, very much blow." The storm is sent by a "big man" who lives in the woods.¹ Now is this Animism? I think not. What may be called a "coincidental marvel" is explained by a myth, and Mythology need be no more than a sort of Animatism grown picturesque. When, however, a Point Barrow Esquimaux, in order to persuade the river to yield him fish, throws tobacco, not into the river, but into the air, and cries out "*Tuana, Tuana*" (spirit),² then here is a full-fledged Animism. Meanwhile, whatever view be taken of the parts respectively played by Animatism, Mythology, Animism, or what not, in investing these observances with meaning and colour, my main point is that the quality of religiousness attaches to them far less in virtue of any one of these ideal constructions than in virtue of that basic feeling of Awe, which drives a man, ere he can think or theorise

¹ Fitzroy, ii., 180.

² Murdoch, *ib.*, 433.

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upon it, into personal relations with the Supernatural.

In order to establish the thesis that the attitude of Supernaturalism towards what *we* should call Inanimate Nature may be independent of animistic interpretations, much more is required in the way of evidence than what I have the space to bring forward here. In the case of matters so indirectly ascertainable as the first beginnings of human thought, the cumulative testimony of very numerous and varied data affords the only available substitute for crucial proof. As it is, however, I must content myself with citing but two more sets of instances bearing on this part of my subject.

The first of these may be of interest to those who have lent their attention to Mr Lang's recent discovery of "Pure"—that is to say, *Ethical*—religion in the wilds of Australia. I have to confess to the opinion with regard to *Daramulun*, *Mungan-ngaur*, *Tundun*, and *Baiamai*, those divinities whom the Kurnai, Murrings, Kamilaroi, and other Australian groups address severally as "Our Father," recognising in them the supernatural headmen and lawgivers of their respective tribes, that their prototype is nothing more or less than that well-known material and inanimate object, the bull-roarer. Its thunderous booming

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must have been eminently awe-inspiring to the first inventors, or rather discoverers, of the instrument, and would not unnaturally provoke the "animatistic" attribution of life and power to it. Then Mythology seems to have stepped in to explain why and how the bull-roarer enforces those tribal ceremonies with which its use is associated, and, after the manner of Myth, to have invented schemes and genealogies of bull-roarers whose wonderful history and dreadful powers it proceeded to chronicle. Thus, for example, *Baiamai* kills *Daramulun* for devouring some of the youths undergoing initiation, but puts his voice into the wood of the bull-roarer.¹ Or *Mungan-ngaur* begets *Tundun*, who first makes the bull-roarers in actual use amongst the Kurnai, and then becomes a porpoise.² Further, Mythology is reinforced by symbolistic ritual. Figures made of logs are set up on the initiation ground to represent *Baiamai* and his wife; or the men throw blazing sticks at the women and children as if it were *Daramulun* coming to burn them.³ As for Animism, however, we never get anywhere near to it save perhaps when *Daramulun's* voice is said to inhabit the bull-roarer, or when he is

¹ Matthews, *J. A. I.*, xxv., 298.

² Howitt, *J. A. I.*, xiv., 312.

³ Matthews, *J. A. I.*, xxiv., 416; xxv., 298.

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spoken of as living in the sky and ruling the ghosts of the dead Kurnai.¹ Nevertheless, despite its want of animistic colouring, a genuine Religion (if reverence shown towards supernatural powers and obedience to their mandates be a sufficient test of genuineness) has sprung up out of the Awe inspired by the bull-roarer; and Mr Lang's assertion may safely be endorsed that Animism, with the opportunities it affords for spiritualistic hocus-pocus, could serve to introduce therein a principle of degeneration only.

My other set of instances pertains to the fascinating subject of stone-worship—a subject, alas! from which I would fain illustrate my point at far greater length. Stones that are at all curious in shape, position, size, or colour—not to speak of properties derived from remarkable coincidences of all sorts—would seem specially designed by nature to appeal to primitive man's "supernaturalistic" tendency. A solitary pillar of rock, a crumpled volcanic boulder, a meteorite, a pebble resembling a pig, a yam, or an arrowhead, a piece of shining quartz, these and such as these are almost certain to be invested by his imagination with the vague but dreadful attributes of Powers. Nor, although to us nothing appears so utterly

¹ Howitt, *J. A. I.*, xiv., 321.

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inanimate as a stone, is savage animatism in the least afraid to regard it as alive. Thus the Kanakas differentiate their sacred stones into males and females, and firmly believe that from time to time little stones appear at the side of the parent blocks.¹ On the other hand, when a Banks' Islander sees a big stone with little stones around it, he says that there is a *Vui* (spirit) inside it, ready if properly conciliated to make the women bear many children and the sows large litters.² Now, this is no longer Animatism, but Animism proper. A piece of sympathetic magic is explained in terms of spirit-causation. The following case from the Baram district of Borneo is transitional. A man protects his fruit trees by placing near them certain round stones in cleft sticks. He then utters a curse, calling upon the stones to witness it: "May he who steals this fruit suffer from stones in the stomach as large as these." Further, suppose a friend of the proprietor wish to eat of the fruit, he will light a fire, and ask the fire to explain to the stone that nothing wrong is being done.³ Here we seem to have simple Animatism, but it may be said to tremble on the verge of Animism, inasmuch as by itself—that is,

¹ Ellis, *Tour round Hawaii*, 113. ² Codrington, *J. A. I.*, x., 276.

³ Hose, *J. A. I.*, xxiii., 161.

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by the mere attribution of life and will—it is unable to account for the magical powers of the stone. How this may be done with the help of Animism is shown us by the Banks' Islanders, already referred to, who, employing stones of a peculiar long shape in much the same way to protect their houses, do so on the explicit ground that the stones have "eaten ghost"—the ghost of a dead man being not unnaturally taken as the type and *ne plus ultra* of awful power.¹ Not to multiply instances, let me roundly state that, amid the vast array of facts relating to the worship of stones, there will be found the most divergent ideal representations of their supernatural nature and powers, ranging from the vaguest semi-conscious belief in their luckiness,² onwards through Animatism, to the distinct animistic conception of them as the home of spirits of the dead or the unborn, or as the image and visible presence of a god; but that underlying all these fluctuating interpretations of thought there may be discerned a single universal feeling, namely the sense of an Awfulness

¹ Codrington, *l.c.*

² I am afraid it may be said that I have not given sufficient prominence to that "moment" in religious feeling which corresponds to the belief in Luck. I do not, however, regard it as a specific emotion in itself, but rather as a compound of the Wonder produced by a coincidence and of sufficient Awe of the *power* therewith seemingly connected, to make it appear worth while to try to conciliate it.

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in them intimately affecting man and demanding of him the fruits of Awe, namely respect, veneration, propitiation, service.

Passing now from the region of what we regard as the Inanimate to that of the Sub-animate and the Animate, we come first in order of upward progress to that tantalising theme, the worship of plants and animals. Now to a large extent this coincides with the subject of Totemism, about which I shall say little, if only because it teems with controversial matter. This much, however, I take to be now relatively certain with regard to it, that in their origin totemistic observances had a magical rather than a strictly religious import. That is to say, their object was not so much to conciliate powers in plant or animal form, as to establish sympathetic control over classes of serviceable plants and animals regarded simply as such, namely as clans or tribes very much on a par with the human ones. Now I am ready to suppose that sympathetic magic in the eyes of the savage is, primarily, no exclusive instrument of religion, but a means of causation on a level with his other methods of exerting force—just as with him talking is not confined exclusively to praying. On the other hand, I believe that the abnormal, and mysterious element in magical

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causation is bound to strike him sooner or later, and to call for explanation in the terms most familiar and most satisfying to primitive mysticism. Thus, in the case of Totemism, the conception of an affinity between the spirits of the plants and animals and their human clients, as effected by Transmigration or some other animistic contrivance, is sure to arise, with the result that the plants and animals by reason of their "spiritualisation" forthwith assume the plenary rank and attributes of Powers. Meanwhile, in order to show how this may come about, I shall bring forward one or two illustrations that have no direct connection with Totemism, as they will then at the same time serve to call attention to the qualities that constitute an intrinsic as opposed to a merely derivatory right to be revered as Supernatural and Awful. There are many animals that are propitiated by primitive man neither because they are merely useful nor merely dangerous, but because they are, in a word, uncanny. White animals (for example, white elephants or white buffaloes), birds of night (notably the owl), monkeys, mice, frogs, crabs, snakes, and lizards, in fact a host of strange and gruesome beasts, are to the savage, of their own right and on the face of them, instinct with dreadful divinity. To take a

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single instance, a fishing party of Crees catch a new and terrible-looking kind of fish. It is promptly returned to the water as a *Manitu*, and five days are wasted whilst it is being appeased.¹ Now in the case of Powers like these, sympathetic magic will naturally suggest the wearing of tooth or claw, bone or skin as a means of sharing in the divine potency. Here is the chance for Animism to step in. Thus a Kennaiah chief who wishes to wear the skin of the Borneo tiger-cat for luck in war, will wrap himself in it, and before lying down to sleep will explain to the skin exactly what he wants, and beg the spirit to send him a propitious dream.² Or in other cases mere association and coincidence will pave the way towards an animistic version of the facts. Thus I have no doubt that it is the uncanny appearance of the snake, combined with its habit of frequenting graves and of entering dwellings, which has led more than one savage people to treat it as the chosen incarnation of their ancestral ghosts.³ And here let me leave this part of the subject, having thus barely touched upon it in order to confirm the single point that Religious Awe is towards Powers, and that these

¹ Hind, *Red River Exped.*, ii., 135.

² Hose, *J. A. I.*, xxiii., 159.

³ "Zulus," Macdonald, *J. A. I.*, xx., 122. "Malagasy," Sibree, *J. A. I.*, xxi., 227.

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are not necessarily spirits or ghosts, though they tend to become so.

At length we reach what I have roughly described as the proper domain and parent-soil of Animism, namely the phenomena that have to do with dream and trance, disease and death. Here the question for us must be, "Do Supernaturalism and Animism originally coincide in respect to these phenomena?" Or, in other words, "Is the Awful, in each and all of them alike, primarily soul or spirit?" My own belief is that the two spheres do not originally coincide, that the Awful in dream and trance is at first distinct from the Awful in death and disease, though the former readily comes to overlay and colour the latter. Thus I conceive that the trance-image, alike on account of its singularity, its accompaniments in the way of physical no less than mental derangement, and its coincidental possibilities, must have been originally and of its own right Awful; and that so, though perhaps to a lesser extent, must have been the dream-image, if only on the ground last mentioned. Nor would I deny that, in regard to death, these two kinds of vision taken together would be bound to suggest to the savage mind that there is a something which survives the body. But have we here a complete account of the influences

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whereby there is produced that mingled fear and love of the dead which culminate in Manes-worship? I think not. For one thing, it is almost an axiom with writers on this subject, that a sort of Solipsism, or Berkleianism (as Professor Sully terms it as he finds it in the Child), operates in the savage to make him refuse to recognise death as a fact, there being at anyrate plenty of proof that he is extremely unwilling to recognise the fact of natural death. The influence, however, which I consider most fundamental of all is something else—namely the awfulness felt to attach to the dead human body in itself. Here, I think, we probably have the cause of the definite assignment to a passing appearance like the trance-image of real and permanent existence in relation to a dead owner; and certainly the main source of the ascription of potency to the soul thus rendered substantive. The thrill of ghost-seeing may be real enough, but I fancy it is nothing to the horror of a human corpse instilled into man's heart by his instinct of self-preservation. In confirmation of this view I would refer to the mass of evidence dealing with the use of human remains for purposes of protective or offensive magic. A skull, a human hand, a scalp-lock, a portion of dried and pounded flesh are potent medicine *in themselves*,

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so long as sympathetic magic is at the stage at which it takes itself for granted. Magical processes, however, as we have seen, specially invite explanation. What more natural, then, given an acquaintance with the images of trance and dream, than to attribute the mysterious potency of a dead man's body to that uncanny thing his wraith? Let me quote just one instance to show how easy is the transition from the one idea to the other. A young native of Leper's Island, out of affection for his dead brother, made his bones into arrow-tips. Thereafter he no longer spoke of himself as "I," but as "we two," and was much feared.¹ The Melanesian explanation was that he had thus acquired the *mana*, or supernatural power, of the dead man. Clearly it is but a hair's breadth that divides the *mana* thus personified from the notion of the attendant ghost, which elsewhere so often meets us.

There remains the difficult question whether Animism is primarily, or only derivatively, connected with the religious Awe felt in the presence of most kinds of disease. I am disposed to say "*distinguo*." As regards delirium, epilepsy, and kindred forms of seizure, the patient's experience of hallucinatory images, combined with the

¹ Codrington, *J. A. I.*, xix., 216-7.

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bystanders' impression that the former is, as we say, "no longer himself," would, I think, wellnigh immediately and directly stamp it as a case of possession by a spirit. Then all convulsive movements, sneezing, yawning, a ringing in the ear, a twitching of the eyelid, and so on, would be explained analogously. On the other hand there is a large and miscellaneous number of diseases that primitive man attributes to witchcraft, without at the same time necessarily ascribing them to the visitation of bad spirits. Thus a savage will imagine that he has a crab or a frog, some red ants or a piece of crystal, in his stomach, introduced by magical means, as for instance by burying the crab (perhaps with an invocation to the crab-fetish)¹ in his path. To remedy such supposed evils the native doctor betakes himself to the sucking cure and the like, whilst he meets spirits with a more or less distinct set of contrivances, for instance the drum or rattle to frighten them, and the hollow bone to imprison them. Meanwhile Animism undoubtedly tends to provide a general explanation for all disease, since disease to the savage mind especially connotes what may be described as "infection" in the widest sense, and infection is eminently suggestive of the

¹ Conolly, *J. A. I.*, xxvi., 151.

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workings of a mobile aggressive agency such as spirit appears intrinsically to be. Let me briefly refer, however, to one form of malady which all the world over excites the liveliest religious Awe, and yet is, so far as I know, but rarely and loosely connected with Animism by savage theorists. The horror of blood I take to be strictly parallel to the horror of a corpse already alluded to; and I believe that in what Westermarck has termed the "mystic detestation" of woman, or in the unreasoning dread which causes a North American brave with a running sore to be banned from the camp,¹ we have a crucial case of a pure and virtually uncoloured religious feeling. The issue of blood "pertains to Wakanda," as the Omahas said.² That is the primary vague utterance of Supernaturalism; and strictly secondary, I conceive, and by way of *ex post facto* justification, is the belief in the magical properties of the blood, the theory that the blood is the life, or the Maori notion that it is full of germs ready to turn into malicious spirits.³

At this point my list of illustrations must come to a close; and it therefore only remains for me to utter a last word in my own defence for having

¹ Adair, *Hist. of Am. Ind.*, 124.

² Dorsey, *Omaha Sociology*, 267.

³ Cf. Tregear, *J. A. I.*, xix., 101.

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called attention to a subject that many will be ready to pronounce both trite, and at the same time incapable of exact or final treatment.

As regards the charge of triteness, I would only say that a disregarded commonplace is no commonplace at all, and that disregard is, anthropologically speaking, to be measured by the actual use to which a conception is put when there is available evidence in the shape of raw facts waiting to be marshalled and pigeon-holed by its aid. I do not find that the leading theorists have by the organisation of their material shown themselves to be sufficiently aware that the animistic idea represents but one amongst a number of ideas, for the most part far more vague than it is, and hence more liable to escape notice; all of which ideas, however, are active in savage religion as we have it, struggling one with the other for supremacy in accordance with the normal tendency of religious thought towards uniformity of doctrinal expression. On the contrary, the impression left on my mind by a study of the leading theorists is that animistic interpretations have by them been decidedly overdone; that, whereas they are prone in the case of the religions of civilisation to detect survivals and fading rudimentary forms, they are less inclined to repeat the process when

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their clues have at length led them back to that stage of primitive thought which perforce must be "original" for them by reason of the lack of earlier evidence, but is not in the least "original" in an absolute sense and from the standpoint of the racial history.

As for the charge of inconclusiveness, this might be in point were it a question of assigning exact limits to the concept to which the word Religion, as employed by Anthropology, ought to correspond. As I have said, however, the only real danger at present can come from framing what is bound to be a purely experimental and preliminary definition in too hard-and-fast a manner. Thus Dr Frazer, though he is doubtless well aware of all the facts I have cited, prefers to treat of Magic and Religion as occupying mutually exclusive spheres, whilst I regard these spheres, not indeed as coincident by any means, but still as overlapping. I, on the other hand, would hold out for the widest possible rendering of the idea of Religion on practical and theoretical grounds alike. As regards the former, I should fear to cut myself off prematurely from any group of facts that might possibly bear upon the history of man's religious evolution. As regards theory, I would rest my case on the psychological argument that, if there

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be reason, as I think there is, to hold that man's religious sense is a constant and universal feature of his mental life, its essence and true nature must then be sought, not so much in the shifting variety of its ideal constructions, as in that steadfast groundwork of specific emotion whereby man is able to feel the supernatural precisely at the point at which his thought breaks down. Thus, from the vague utterance of the Omaha, "the blood pertains to Wakanda," onwards through Animism, to the dictum of the greatest living idealist philosopher, "the Universe is a Spiritual Whole," a single impulse may be discerned as active—the impulse, never satisfied in finite consciousness yet never abandoned, to bring together and grasp as one the *That* and the *What* of God.

FROM SPELL TO PRAYER

THIS paper represents the fruit of some rather perfunctory, if only because interrupted, meditation on the broader and, so to speak, more philosophic features of the contrast drawn between magic and religion by Dr Frazer in the second edition of his *Golden Bough*. Meanwhile, it is more immediately written round the subject of the relation of incantation to invocation, the spell to the prayer. I confess to having reached my conclusions by ways that are largely *a priori*. By this I do not mean, of course, that I have excogitated them out of my inner consciousness, as the Teutonic professor in the story is said to have excogitated the camel. I simply mean that the preliminary induction on which my hypothesis is based consists partly in considerations pertaining to the universal psychology of man, and partly in general impressions derived from a limited amount of discursive reading about savages. The verification of my theory, on the other hand, by means of a detailed comparison of its results with the relevant evidence is a task beyond my present

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means. As for my illustrations, these have been hastily gathered from a few standard books and papers, and most of all, I think, from that house of heaped-up treasure, the *Golden Bough* itself. In these circumstances my sole excuse for challenging the views of an authority whose knowledge and command of anthropological fact is truly vast, must be that in the present inchoate state of the science there can be no closed questions, nor even any reserved ones—no mysteries over which expert may claim the right to take counsel with expert, secure from the incursions of the irresponsible amateur. I would add that what I have to say is not intended in any way to abrogate Dr Frazer's contrast between magic and religion. On the contrary, I consider it to embody a working distinction of first-rate importance. I merely wish to mitigate this contrast by proposing what, in effect, amounts to a separation in lieu of a divorce. A working principle, if it is to work, must not be pushed too hard.

The question, then, that I propose to discuss is the following: Does the spell help to generate the prayer, and, if so, how? Now the spell belongs to magic, and the prayer to religion. Hence we are attacking, in specific shape, no less a problem than this: Does magic help to generate religion?

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Perhaps it will make for clearness of exposition if I outline the reply I would offer in what follows to this latter question. First, I suppose certain beliefs, of a kind natural to the infancy of thought, to be accepted at face value in a spirit of naïve faith, whilst being in fact illusory. The practice corresponding to such naïve belief I call "rudimentary magic." Afterwards I conceive a certain sense of their *prima facie* illusiveness to come to attach to these beliefs, without, however, managing to invalidate them. This I call the stage of "developed magic." Such magic, as embodying a reality that to some extent transcends appearance, becomes to a corresponding extent a mystery. As such, on my view, it tends to fall within the sphere of religion. For I define the object of religion to be whatever is perceived as a mystery and treated accordingly. (Dr Frazer, however, defines religion differently, and this must be borne in mind in estimating the pertinence of such criticisms as I may pass on his interpretations of the facts.)

Let us now turn to the *Golden Bough* to see what light it throws on this same problem, viz. whether magic is a factor in the genesis of religion. If I understand Dr Frazer aright—and of this I am by no means sure—his position comes to this. Magic

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is a negative, but not a positive, condition of the genesis of religion. The failure of magic is the opportunity of religion. Hence it may be said to help to generate religion in the sense in which the idle apprentice may be said to help to set up his more industrious rival by allowing him to step into his shoes. But it makes no positive contribution to religion either in the way of form or of content.

More explicitly stated, Dr Frazer's theory runs somewhat thus. (It is only fair to note that it is a theory which he puts forward "tentatively" and "with diffidence.")¹ Originally, and so long as the highest human culture was at what may be described as an Australian level, magic reigned supreme, and religion was not. But time and trial proved magic to be a broken reed. "Man saw that he had taken for causes what were no causes, and that all his efforts to work by means of these imaginary causes had been vain. His painful toil had been wasted, his curious ingenuity had been squandered to no purpose. He had been pulling at strings to which nothing was attached." Whereupon "our primitive philosopher" (and truly, we may say, did that savage of "deeper mind" and "shrewder intelligence" deserve this

¹ *G. B.*,² i., 73 n., 75.

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title of "philosopher," if he could thus reason, as Dr Frazer makes him do, about "causes" and the like) advanced, "very slowly," indeed, and "step by step," to the following "solution of his harassing doubts." "If the great world went on its way without the help of him or his fellows, it must surely be because there were other beings, like himself, but far stronger, who, unseen themselves, directed its course and brought about all the varied series of events which he had hitherto believed to be dependent on his own magic."

Now the impression I get from these passages, and from the whole of those twenty pages or so which Dr Frazer devotes to the subject of the relation of magic to religion as such, is that the epic vein decidedly predominates therein. The glowing periods in which the history of "the great transition" is recounted are not easily translated into the cold prose of science. Construed literally they appear liable to not a few serious strictures. For example, pure ratiocination seems to be credited with an effectiveness without a parallel in early culture. Almost as well say that when man found he could not make big enough bags with the throwing-stick, he sat down and excogitated the bow-and-arrow. Or again "unseen beings" seem to be introduced as "mysterious powers" sprung

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fully-armed from the brain of man, and otherwise without assigned pre-history.¹) Finally, magic and religion appear to be treated as in their inmost psychologic nature disparate and unsympathetic forces, oil and water, which even when brought into juxtaposition are so far from mixing that the observer has no difficulty in distinguishing what is due to the presence of each.² One's first impression is that a purely analytic method has escaped its own notice in putting on a pseudo-genetic guise, that mere heads of classification have first been invested with an impermeable essence, and then identified with the phases of a historical development which is thereby robbed of all intrinsic continuity. But on second thoughts one sees, I think, that to construe literally here is to construe illiberally. Dr Frazer, in order to dispose summarily of an interminable question, may be supposed to have resorted to a kind of Platonic myth.) A certain priority and a certain absoluteness within its own province had to be vindicated for magic as against religion, if the special problem of the *Golden Bough* was to be kept free of irrelevancies. This vindication the myth contrives, and the rest is, so to speak, literature. If Dr Frazer contemplates a specific

¹ *G. B.*,² i., 78.

² Cf. *ib.*, 33, 45, etc.

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work on the early history of religion, he doubtless intends to fill in what are manifest gaps in the present argument. Meanwhile, as regards the inquiry we are now embarked on, we may say that, ~~so~~ far as he goes, Dr Frazer is against the view that magic is capable of merging in religion so as to become part and parcel of it; but that he does not go very far into the question, and leaves it more or less open to further discussion. Wherefore to its further discussion let us proceed.

Now in the first place it would clearly simplify our task if we could find sufficient reason for assuming that, whatever it may afterwards have become, magic was originally something wholly unrelated to religion—that, in short, it was originally *sui generis*. I may point out that this is by no means the same thing as to postulate, with Dr Frazer, an “Age of Magic,” when religion simply was not.¹ Our assumption would not exclude the possibility of some sort of religion having been coeval with magic. Which, let me add, might have been the case, even were it shown that magic can generate religion of a kind. For religion has all the appearance of being a highly complex and multifarious growth—a forest rather than a tree.

That magic was originally *sui generis* might seem

¹ See *G. B.*,² i., 73.

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a doctrine that hardly calls for establishment, so universally is it accepted by anthropologists. Its peculiar *provenance* is held to be completely known. Thus Dr Frazer tells us that Magic may be "deduced immediately from elementary processes of reasoning," meaning the laws of association, or, specifically, the laws of association by similarity and by contiguity in space or time.¹

Now it seems to me that, once more, these statements need to be construed liberally. The psychological purist might justly doubt whether Dr Frazer is literally able to deduce magic immediately from the laws of association. He would, at anyrate, deny Dr Frazer's right to describe the laws of association as "processes of reasoning" or "laws of thought" in any strict sense of these terms.² A generation ago, no doubt, when the self-styled school of "experience" dominated British psychology, these expressions would have passed muster. In which context it is perhaps relevant to remark that Dr Frazer's theory of the associationalist origin of magic would seem to have been influenced by that of Dr Jevons, and that of Dr Jevons in its turn by that of Dr Tylor, which was framed more than thirty years ago, and naturally reflects the current state of

¹ *G. B.*,² i., 70. Cf. 62.

² *Ib.*, 70 and 62.

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psychological opinion. To-day, however, no psychologist worth seriously considering holds that association taken strictly for just what it is suffices to explain anything that deserves the name of reasoning or thought, much less any form of practical contrivance based on reasoning or thought. First of all, association is no self-acting "mental chemistry," but depends on continuity of interest. Secondly, thought, that is, thought-construction, instead of merely reproducing the old, transforms it into something new. The psychological purist, then, might justly find fault with Dr Frazer's remarks as lacking in technical accuracy, were technical accuracy to be looked for in a passage that, to judge from its style, is semi-popular in its purport. Even so, however, this loose language is to be regretted. Seeing that an all-sufficient associationalism has for sound reason been banished from psychology, the retention of its peculiar phraseology is to be deprecated as liable to suggest that anthropology is harbouring an impostor on the strength of obsolete credentials.

A word more touching the want of precision in Dr Frazer's language. As in his account of the interior history of the genesis of religion, so in his characterisation of the inner nature of magic he

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seems to exaggerate the work of pure ratiocination. Thus he speaks of magic as a "philosophy" consisting in "principles" from which the savage "infers" and "concludes" this and that;¹ magic "proceeds upon" such and such "assumptions"; and so on.² Now on the face of them these appear to be glaring instances of what is known as "the psychologist's fallacy." The standpoint of the observer seems to be confused with the standpoint of the mind under observation. But there are indications that Dr Frazer expects us to make the necessary allowance for his metaphorical diction. Thus one of the "assumptions" of magic is said to consist in a "faith" that whilst "real and firm" is nevertheless "implicit."³ Meanwhile, from the point of view of the psychological purist, implicit, that is, unconscious, inferences, assumptions, and so on, are little better than hybrids. Now doubtless a considerable amount of real inference may be operative at certain stages in the development of magic. Nay, certain forms of magic may even be found to have originated in a theorising about causes that did not arise out of practice save indirectly, and was the immediate fruit of reflection. I refer more especially to divination, if divination is to be classed under

¹ *G. B.*,² *i.*, 9.

² *Ib.*, 49.

³ *Ib.* Cf. 62 with 61.

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magic, as Dr Tylor thinks that it should.¹ But, speaking generally, the working principle we had better adopt as inquirers into the origin of magic is, I suggest, the following: to expect the theory to grow out of the practice, rather than the other way about; to try to start from a savage Monsieur Jourdain who talks prose whilst yet unaware that he is doing so.

In what follows I shall seek to observe this working principle. Meanwhile, I cannot pretend to a systematic and all-inclusive treatment of a subject which, for me, I confess, has at present no well-marked limits. Dr Frazer's division of magic into two kinds, imitative and sympathetic,² is highly convenient for analysis, but I am not so sure that it directly subserves genesis. Not to speak of the question already touched on whether divination falls under magic, there are other practices quasi-magical in form, for instance the familiar sucking-cure, which cannot be easily reduced to cases either of imitative or sympathetic magic, and which nevertheless, I believe, are of connate psychological origin with practices of one or other of the last-mentioned types. In these circumstances my attempt at a derivation of magic

¹ See his article "Magic" in *Encycl. Brit.* (ninth edit.).

² *G. B.*,² i., 9.

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must be taken in the spirit in which it is offered—namely as illustrative merely. I shall keep as closely as I can to undisputed forms of magical practice, for instance the casting of spells by means of an image, in the hope that their development moves along the central line of historical advance.

To start, then, as Dr Frazer seems to suggest that we might,¹ from the brutes. When a bull is in a rage—and let us note that the rage as determining the direction of interest has a good deal to do with the matter²—it will gore my discarded coat instead of me, provided that the coat is sufficiently near, and I am sufficiently remote, for the proximate stimulus to dominate its attention. Of course it is very hard to say what really goes on in the bull's mind. Possibly there is little or no meaning in speaking of association as contributory to its act, as would be the case supposing it be simply the sight of something immediately gorable that lets loose the discharge of wrath. On the other hand, suppose it to perceive in the coat the slightest hint or flavour of the intruding presence of a moment before, suppose it to be moved by the least aftertaste of the sensations provoked by my

¹ Cf. *G. B.*,² i., 70.

² Cf. Stout, *Groundwork of Psychology*, Section on "Emotion as determining ideal revival," p. 120.

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red tie or rapidly retreating form, and we might justly credit association with a hand in the matter. And now to pass from the case of the animal to that of man, in regard to whom a certain measure of sympathetic insight becomes possible. With a fury that well-nigh matches the bull's in its narrowing effect on the consciousness, the lover, who yesterday perhaps was kissing the treasured glove of his mistress, to-day, being jilted, casts her portrait on the fire. Here let us note two things. Firstly, the mental digression, the fact that he is for the nonce so "blind," as we say, with love or rancour, that the glove or the portrait has by association become substituted for the original object of his sentiments, namely his mistress. Secondly, the completeness of the digression. This dear glove fit only to be kissed, this hateful portrait fit only to be burnt, occupies his whole attention, and is therefore equivalent to an irresistible belief that realises itself as inevitably as a suggestion does in the case of the hypnotic patient. Such at least is the current psychological explanation of the phenomenon known as "primitive credulity."

Now can the man who throws the faithless maiden's portrait into the fire, simply because the sight of it irresistibly provokes him to do so, be said to be practising magic? I think, hardly.

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Since, however, it is better that the class-concepts of anthropology should be framed too wide rather than too narrow, let us speak of a "rudimentary magic," of which the act of primitive credulity is the psychological *terminus a quo*. I contrast such "rudimentary magic" with the "developed magic" whereof the spirit is expressed in the formula: As I do this symbolically, so may something else like it be done in reality. In the former naïve belief prevails, in the latter a make-believe. In what immediately follows we shall be concerned with the psychological history of the transition from the rudimentary to the developed form. ↗

The feature which it is most important for our purpose to note in the act of primitive credulity is that, to coin a phrase, it is not projective. This is well illustrated by the case of the bull. The bull does not gore my coat with any ulterior motive prejudicial to me. On the contrary, it contentedly gores the coat, and, unless I am unfortunate enough to recall the bull's attention to myself, I escape. Thus there is none of that projectiveness to be ascribed to the bull's motive which so characteristically enters into the motive of the act of developed magic. We may be sure that the bull does not conceive (*a*) that he is acting

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symbolically, that, in child-language, he is “only pretending”; (b) that at the same time his pretending somehow causes an ulterior effect, similar as regards its ideal character, but different in that it constitutes that real thing which is the ultimate object of the whole proceeding.

And now let us go on to consider how such primitive credulity is sundered from the beginnings of enlightenment—if to practise projective magic is to be enlightened—only by the veriest hair’s-breadth. The moment the bull’s rage has died out of him, the coat he was goring becomes that uninteresting thing a coat must be to the normal animal whose interest is solely in the edible. Now the bull, being a bull, probably passes from the one perceptual context to the other, from coat gorable to coat inedible, without any feeling of the relation between them; they are simply not one coat for him at all, but two. But now put in the bull’s place a more or less brute-like man, with just that extra dash of continuity in his mental life that is needed in order that the two coats—the two successive phases of consciousness—may be compared. How will they be compared? We may be sure that the comparison will be, so to speak, in favour of the more normal and abiding experience of the two. If it be more normal to ignore

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the coat than to gore it, there will arise a certain sense—you may make it as dim as you will to begin with, but once it is there at all it marks a step in advance of primitive credulity—of the gorable aspect of the coat as relatively delusive and unreal, of the act of passion as relatively mis-directed and idle.

Meanwhile, notwithstanding this new-found capacity to recognise later on that he has been deluded, rage will continue to delude the subject so long as its grip upon him lasts. Nay more, directly there is a nascent self-consciousness, a sort of detached personality to act as passive spectator, the deluding passion may be actually accompanied by an awareness of being given over to unreal imaginings and vain doings. Doubtless your relatively low savage might say with Kipling's philosopher of the barrack-room:

“ [I've] stood beside an' watched myself
Be'avin' like a blooming fool.”

Make-believe, however, such as we meet with in developed magic, involves something more than mere concurrent awareness that one is being fooled by one's passion. It involves positive acquiescence in such a condition of mind. The subject is not completely mastered by the suggestion, as in

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the act of primitive credulity. On the contrary, he more or less clearly perceives it to be fanciful, and yet dallies with it and lets it work upon him. Now why should he do this? Well, originally, I suspect, because he feels that it does him good. Presumably, to work off one's wrath on any apology for an enemy is expletive, that is, cathartic. He knows that he is not doing the real thing, but he finds it does him good to believe he is doing it, and so he makes himself believe it. Symbol and ulterior reality have fallen apart in his thought, but his "will to believe" builds a bridge from the one to the other. Symbolic act and ulterior act symbolised are, we must remember, connected by an ideal bond, in that they are more or less alike, have a character partially identical which so far as it is identical is provocative of one and the same type of reaction. All that is required for the symbolic act to acquire projectiveness is that this ideal bond be conceived as a real bond. Since, however, the appearance of mere ideality can *ex hypothesi* be no longer ignored, it must instead be explained away. Primitive credulity no longer suffices. In the place of a naïve and effortless faith there is needed the kind of faith that, to whatever extent it is assailed by doubt, can recover itself by self-justification.

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The methods of self-justification as practised by the primitive mind, become aware that it is pretending, yet loth to abandon a practice rooted in impulse and capable of affording relief to surcharged emotion, are well worth the attention of the anthropologist. The subject tends to be ignored in proportion as association pure and simple is regarded as be-all and end-all of the "art magic." Now we need not suppose that because the primitive mind is able to explain away its doubts, there is therefore necessarily any solid and objective truth at the back of its explanations. Given sufficient bias in favour of a theory, the human mind, primitive or even civilised, by unconsciously picking its facts and by the various other familiar ways of fallacy, can bring itself to believe almost any kind of nonsense. At the same time there does happen to be an objectively true and real projectiveness in the kind of symbolic magic we have been especially considering—the discharge of wrath on the image or what not. We know that as a fact to be symbolically tortured and destroyed by his enemy "gets on the nerves" of the savage, so that he is apt really to feel torturing pains and die.¹ The psychology of the matter is up to a certain point simple enough, the

¹ See *e.g.* *G. B.*,² i., 13.

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principles involved being indeed more or less identical with those we have already had occasion to consider. Just as the savage is a good actor, throwing himself like a child into his mime, so he is a good spectator, entering into the spirit of another's acting, herein again resembling the child, who can be frightened into fits by the roar of what he knows to be but a "pretended" lion. Even if the make-believe is more or less make-believe to the victim, it is hardly the less efficacious; for, dominating as it tends to do the field of attention, it racks the emotional system, and, taking advantage of the relative abeyance of intelligent thought and will, sets stirring all manner of deep-lying impulses and automatisms. Well, this being objectively the fact, are we to allow that the savage magician and his victim may become aware of the fact? I think we must. Of course the true reasons of the fact, namely that suggestion is at work, and so on, are beyond the ken of primitive man. But I submit that the projectiveness of the magical act is grounded, not merely on a subjective bias that "fakes" its facts, but on one that is met half-way, so to speak, by the real facts themselves. I would even suppose that the kind of magic practised by man on man, since it lent itself especially to objective verification, may

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very well have been the earliest kind of developed magic—the earliest kind to pass beyond the stage of impulse to that of more or less conscious and self-justifying policy. Were this the case, one would have to assume that the savage extended his sphere of operations by some dim sort of analogous reasoning. If, despite appearances to the contrary, magic really answered in the case of man, it would really answer in the case of the weather and so on, to vent one's spleen on the weather being, meanwhile, as a naïve impulsive act, hardly, if at all, less natural than to do so in the case of one's human foe.¹ Thus I surmise that the proved effectiveness of the social department of developed magic gave the greater share of such logical support as was required to the meteorological and other branches of the business.

It is high time that we address ourselves to the more immediate subject of our interest, the spell, the nature of which, however, could not fail to be misunderstood so long as the magical act was vaguely conceived on its psychological side, that is, the side of its true inwardness, the side to which it is the supreme business even of an anthropology that prides itself on its "objective methods" to attend. To begin, then, at the beginning, why

¹ Cf. *G. B.*,² i., 108-9.

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should there be an accompanying spell at all? Is it, in fact, an indispensable part of the true magical ceremony? Now it is true that not infrequently the absence of any incantation from a piece of magical ritual as at anyrate performed to-day is expressly noted. To give but one example. Among the Khonds of Orissa a branch cut by a priest in the enemy's country is dressed up and armed so as to personate one of the foe. Thereupon it is thrown down at the shrine of the war god, but this "appeal" to him for co-operation is, we are expressly told, "silent,"¹ and that notwithstanding the semi-religious character which the magical rite has put on. On the other hand, the use of the spell as an accompaniment or rather integral portion of the magical performance is so prevalent, that I am inclined, merely on the strength of the historical evidence, to regard its presence as normal in the perfect and uncontaminated ceremony. This supposition would, however, be immensely strengthened if we could discover good psychological reason why the spell ought to be there.

I preferred a moment ago to speak of the spell as an integral portion, rather than as the mere accompaniment, of the magical rite, since it is

¹ *J. A. I.*, ix., 362.

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rather with developed than with rudimentary magic that we shall be concerned when in the sequel we consider actual specimens of the kind of spell in use. Corresponding to the act of primitive credulity there may be, I conceive, a kind of spell, if spell it can be called, which is no more than a mere accompaniment. Such a verbal accompaniment will either be purely expletive, or it may be what I shall call "descriptive," as when a child making a picture of a man says aloud to himself, "I am making a man"; that is, supposing him to be merely playing spectator to himself, and not to be assisting himself to imagine that what he draws is a man. Such descriptive accompaniments would of course tend to pass, unaltered in form, into instruments of make-believe as soon as the make-believe stage of magic begins. Nevertheless, the whole psychological character of the spell is from that moment changed. It henceforth forms an integral part of the rite, since it helps the action out.

What do I mean by "helping the action out"? Let us recur to the notion of developed magic as a more or less clearly recognised pretending, which at the same time is believed to project itself into an ulterior effect. Now I cannot but suppose that such projectiveness is bound to strike the

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savage as mysterious. "But no," says Dr Frazer; "magic is the savage equivalent of our natural science." This I cannot but profoundly doubt. If it is advisable to use the word "science" at all in such a context, I should say that magic was *occult* science to the savage, "occult" standing here for the very antithesis of "natural." Dr Frazer proceeds to work out his parallel by formulating the assumption he holds to be common to magic and natural science. Both alike imply "that in nature one event follows another necessarily and invariably without the intervention of any spiritual or personal agency"; or again, "that the course of nature is determined, not by the passions or caprice of personal beings, but by the operation of immutable laws acting mechanically."¹ But the "necessity," the "law," implicit in developed magic as revealed by the corresponding type of spell, namely the type of spell which helps the action out, is surely something utterly distinct in kind from what natural science postulates under these same notoriously ambiguous names. It is not the "is and cannot but be" of a satisfied induction. On the contrary, it is something that has but the remotest psychological

¹ *G. B.*,² i., 61, 63. In iii., 459, however, the view that magic and science have any real presupposition in common seems virtually to be given up.

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affinity therewith, namely such a "must" as is involved in "May so and so happen," or "I do this in order that so and so may happen." Such a "must" belongs to magic in virtue of the premonitory projectiveness that reveals itself in the operator's act of imperative willing. Meanwhile so far as the process fails to explain itself in this way—and it must always, I contend, be felt as something other than a normal and ordinary act of imperative willing—it will inevitably be felt to be occult, supernormal, supernatural, and will participate in, whilst *pro tanto* colouring, whatever happens to be the general mode of accounting for supernaturalistic events. But this, I take it, will always tend to be some theory of quasi-personal agency.

Dr Frazer, however, is so far from allowing this that he makes the implicit presupposition to be the very opposite of the notion of personal agency, namely the idea of mechanical causation. He does not, however, attempt to go into the psychology of the matter, and the psychological probabilities, I submit, will be found to tell dead against this view of his. Mechanical causation is indeed by no means unknown to the savage. From the moment he employs such mechanical aids as tools he may be supposed to perceive that

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the work he does with them proceeds as it were directly and immediately from them. He throws a spear at his enemy; it hits him; and the man drops. That the spear makes the man drop he can see. But when a wizard brandishes a magic spear simply in the direction of a distant, perhaps absent and invisible, person, who thereafter dies, the wizard—not to speak of the bystanders—is almost bound to notice something in the action of the symbolic weapon that is indirect, and as such calls aloud for explanation on non-mechanical lines. The spear did not do it of itself, but some occult power, whether in, or behind, the spear. Further, his own consciousness cannot fail to give him an intuitive inkling of what this power is, namely, his projection of will, a psychic force, a manifestation of personal agency, *mana*. It is a secondary consideration whether he locate the personal agency, the “devil,” in the spear, in himself, or in some *tertium quid* that possesses it or him. In any case the power is represented quasi-personally. I am quite prepared to believe with Mr Lang that gods tend at first to be conceived as exercising their power precisely as a magician does.¹ But it does not therefore follow, as it must if Dr Frazer’s theory of magical as mechanical

¹ *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, i., 120.

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causation be accepted, that in some sense the early gods came down to men "from out of a machine."

We have been hitherto considering the magical act from the point of view of the operator. Let us now inquire what sort of character is imposed by it on the other party to the transaction, namely the victim. If our previous hypothesis be correct, that to the operator the magical act is generically a projection of imperative will, and specifically one that moves on a supernormal plane, it follows that the position of the victim will be, in a word, a position compatible with *rapport*. As the operator is master of a supernormal "must," so the victim is the slave of that same "must." Now surely there is nothing in such a position on the part of the victim that is incompatible with the possession of what we know as will. On the contrary, might we not expect that the operator, as soon as he comes to reflect on the matter at all, would think of his power as somehow making itself felt by his victim, as somehow coming home to him, as somehow reaching the unwilling will of the man and bending it to an enforced assent? On this theory a magical transaction ought, hardly if at all less naturally than a religious transaction, to assume the garb of an affair between persons. We shall see presently whether there is evidence

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that it actually does. On Dr Frazer's view, however, magic and religion are systems based on assumptions that are as distinct and wide apart as matter and mind, their ultimate implications. Hence if magic and religion join forces, it is for Dr Frazer a mere contamination of unrelated originals incapable of presenting the inward unity of a single self-developing plot. He is driven to allege a "confusion of ideas," a "mixture," a "fusion," an "amalgamation," such as can take place only under the pressure of some extrinsic influence.¹ For a satisfactory clue, however, to the nature of the collocating cause we search his writings in vain.

Meanwhile, Dr Frazer seems to admit the thin end of the wedge into his case for a mechanically-causative magic by allowing that the material on which it works is composed not merely of "things which are regarded as inanimate," but likewise of "persons whose behaviour in the particular circumstances is known to be determined with absolute certainty."² Now of course magic may be conceived as taking effect on a person through his body, as when that which is projected takes the form of an *atnongara* stone, viz. a piece of

¹ *G. B.*,² i., 67, 69.

² See *G. B.*,² i., 63, where this is clearly implied.

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crystal, or of something half-material, half-personal, like the *arungquilha* of the Arunta, or the *badi* of the Malays.¹ After all, magic in one of its most prominent aspects is a disease-making. But Dr Frazer's interest is not in these secondary notions. He is seeking to elucidate the ultimate implication of magic when he explains "determined with absolute certainty" to mean—"determined, as is "the course of nature," "by the operation of immutable laws acting mechanically."² But a person conceived as simply equivalent to an inanimate thing—for that is precisely what it comes to—is a fundamentally different matter, I contend, from the notion I take to be, not implicit, but nascently explicit³ here, namely that of a will constrained. No doubt the modern doctrine of a psychological automatism virtually forbids us to speak any longer of "will" in such a connection. To naïve thought, however, as witness the more popular explanations of the phenomena of suggestion current in our own time, the natural correlative to exercise of will on the part of the operator will surely be submission, *i.e.* of will, as we should say, on the part of the

¹ Cf. Spencer and Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*, 531 and 537. Skeat, *Malay Magic*, 427.

² *G. B.*,² i., 63.

³ Compare the effect on the woman ascribed to the *lonka-lonka*, below, p. 75

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patient. For the rest, it would seem that Dr Frazer bases his case for it being a kind of physical necessity that is ascribed by the savage to the workings of his magic on the explanation which the medicine-man gives of his failures, when he alleges that nothing but the interference of another more potent sorcerer could have robbed his spell of its efficacy.¹ But the excuse appears to imply, if anything, a conditionality and relativity of will-power, of *mana*, the analogy of the scientific law being manifestly far-fetched. And surely it is in any case somewhat rash to deduce the implicit assumptions of an art from such a mere piece of professional "bluff."

If, then, the occult projectiveness of the magical act is naturally and almost inevitably interpreted as an exertion of will that somehow finds its way to another will and dominates it, the spell or uttered "must" will tend, I conceive, to embody the very life and soul of the affair. Nothing initiates an imperative more cleanly, cutting it away from the formative matrix of thought and launching it on its free career, than the spoken word. Nothing, again, finds its way home to another's mind more sharply. It is the very type

¹ *G. B.*,² i., 61. See, however, *Sp. and G.*, 532, from which it appears that the medicine-man by no means sticks to a single form of excuse.

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of a spiritual projectile. I do not, indeed, believe that what may be called the silent operations of imitative magic are ultimately sign-language and nothing more. I prefer to think, as I have already explained, that they are originally like the fire drawn from an excitable soldier by the tree-stump he mistakes for an enemy, or, more precisely, miscarriages of passion-clouded purpose prematurely caused by a chance association; and that what might be called their prefigurative function is an outgrowth. But I certainly do incline to think that, when the stage of developed magic is reached and the projectiveness of the mimic act is established as a fact, a fact however, that as mysterious, occult, calls aloud for interpretation, the projective character of the silent part of the magical ritual will come to underlie its whole meaning; and further, that the spell, as being the crispest embodiment of the "must," as spring and soul of the projection, will naturally provide the general explanatory notion under which the rest will be brought, namely that of an imperative utterance.

Let us now consider typical specimens of the various kinds of spell in common use, partly in order to test and substantiate the foregoing contentions, but more especially so that haply we may observe the spell pass by easy gradations

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into the prayer, the imperative into the optative. To begin with, I would suggest that at the stage of developed magic the most perfect spell is one of the following form—a form so widely distributed and easily recognised that a single example will suffice to characterise it. In ancient Peru, when a war expedition was contemplated, they were wont to starve certain black sheep for some days and then slay them, uttering the incantation:¹ “As the hearts of these beasts are weakened, so let our enemies be weakened.” Precisely the same type is found all over the world, from Central Australia to Scotland.² I call this form perfect, because it takes equal notice of present symbolisation and ulterior realisation, instrument and end. Here the instrument is the weakening of the beasts, the end the weakening of the enemy. Let us not, however, overlook the explicitly stated link between the two, the unifying soul of the process, namely the imperative “let them be weakened.” It is apt to escape one’s attention because the operator, instead of obtruding his personality upon us, concentrates like a good workman on his instrument, which might therefore at the first glance be credited with the origination of the force it but transmits. Not unfrequently, however, the

¹ *Acosta*, ii., 342.

² Cf. *Sp. and G.*, 536, and *G. B.*,² i., 17.

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personal agency of the operator appears on the surface of the spell, as when sunshine is made in New Caledonia by kindling a fire and saying: "Sun! I do this that you may be burning hot."¹ Here the sun is treated as a "you," so that the operator is perhaps not unnaturally led to refer to himself as the other party to this transaction between persons. Meanwhile, though our second instance is interesting as indicating the true source of the *mana* immanent in the spell, namely the operator's exertion of will-power, it is better not to insist too strongly on the difference between the instrument and the force that wields and as it were fills it. Both alike belong to what may be called the protasis of the spell. The important logical cleavage occurs between protasis and apodosis—the firing of the projectile and the hitting of the target—the setting-in-motion of the instrument and the realisation of the end. Every true spell, I submit, distinguishes implicitly or explicitly between the two. I say implicitly or explicitly, for we find curtailed spells of the kind "We carry Death into the water," no mention being made of the symbol.² It would be quite wrong, however, to argue that here is no make-believe, no disjoining of instrument and end requiring an exertion of

¹ Cf. *G. B.*,² i., 116.

² *Ib.*, ii., 83.

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credulity that simply takes the one act for the other. This is shown by the occurrence of the same sort of spell in fuller form, *e.g.* "Ha, Koré, we fling you into the river, like these torches, that you may return no more."¹ The participants in the rite know, in short, that they are "only pretending." They have the thought which it is left to Mr Skeat's Malays to express with perfect clearness: "It is not wax that I am scorching, it is the liver, heart, and spleen of So-and-so that I scorch."²

This relative disjunction, then, of instrument and end, protasis and apodosis, being taken as characteristic of the spell of developed magic, let us proceed to inquire how each in turn is in general character fitted to promote the development of the prayer out of the spell (assuming this to be possible at all). First, then, let us consider whether magic contributes anything of its own to religion when we approach the subject from the side of what has been called the instrument. Under this head we have agreed to take account both of the projective act and of the projectile—in other words, both of the putting forth of the "must" and of the symbol in which the "must" is embodied.

Now the projective act, I have tried to show,

¹ Cf. *G. B.*,² ii., 108.

² *M. M.*, 570.

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whilst felt by the operator as essentially a kind of imperative willing, is yet concurrently perceived by him to be no ordinary and normal kind of imperative willing. Inasmuch as the merely symbolised and pretended reproduces itself in an ulterior and separate shape as solid fact, the process is manifestly occult or supernormal. Now I have elsewhere tried to show probable reason why the prime condition of the historical genesis of religion should be sought in the awe caused in man's mind by the perception of the supernatural, that is, supernormal, as it occurs within him and about him. For the purposes of the anthropologist I would have the limits of primitive religion coincide with those of primitive "supernaturalism." To adopt a happy phrase coined by Mr Hartland when noticing my view, the supernatural is the original "theoplasm, god-stuff."¹ Is, then, the occult or supernatural as revealed in magic at first the one and only form of supernatural manifestation known to man? Emphatically I say, No. To take but one, and that perhaps the most obvious, example of an object of supernaturalistic awe that anthropology must be content to treat as primary and *sui generis*, the mystery of human death may be set over against the miracle of the magical

¹ *Folk-Lore*, xii., 27.

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projection as at least as original and unique a rallying-point of superstition. On the other hand, I am quite prepared to believe that magical occultism was able of its own right to colour primitive supernaturalism to a marked and noteworthy extent. I suggest that the peculiar contribution of magic—at all events of the kind of magic we have been considering—to religion was the idea of *mana*. No doubt, the actual *mana* of the Melanesians will on analysis be found to yield a very mixed and self-contradictory set of meanings, and to stand for any kind of power that rests in whatever way upon the divine. I suppose it, however, to have the central and nuclear sense of magical power; and, apart from the question of historical fact, let me, for expository purposes at anyrate, be allowed to give the term this connotation. The inwardness of such *mana* or magical power we have seen reason to regard as derived by the magician from a more or less intuitive perception of his projective act of will as the force which occultly transmutes his pretence into ulterior reality. But if the essence of his supernormal power lie in precisely this, then wherever else there be discoverable supernormal power under control of a person, will not its essence tend to be conceived as consisting in the same? Mean-

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while, all manifestations of the supernatural are likely to appear as in some sense manifestations of power, and as in some sense personally controlled. That they should be noticed at all by man they must come within the range of his practical interests, that is, be as agents or patients in regard to him; and, if he is in awe of them, it will assuredly be as agents, actual or potential, that is, as powers, that he will represent them to himself. And again, whatever is able to stand up against him as an independent and self-supporting radiator of active powers will be inevitably invested by him with more or less selfhood or personality like in kind to what he is conscious of in himself. Thus there is no difficulty in explaining psychologically why *mana* should be attributed to those quasi-personal powers of awful nature by which the savage, immersed in half-lights and starting like a child at his own shadow, feels himself on every hand to be surrounded.

Why, then, does Dr Frazer, whilst admitting that for the magician to seek for *mana* at the hands of ghosts of the dead, stones, snakes, and so on, is characteristic of that "earlier stage" in the history of religion when the antagonism between sorcerer and priest as yet was not, nevertheless treat this as a "confusion of magic and religion,"

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and go on to lay it down that "this fusion is not primitive"?¹ Is it not simply that he ignores the possibility of the origin of the idea of *mana* itself in the inward experience that goes with the exercise of developed magic? For Dr Frazer this seeking for supernatural aid on the part of the sorcerer is a "passing into another kind." The sorcerer's exertion of power and the *mana* he craves of his gods have no direct psychological affinity. If, however, our argument has not been all along proceeding on a false track, there is a specific identity of nature common to the force which animates the magical act as such, and that additional force which in certain cases is sought from an external supernatural source. Psychologically speaking, there seems every reason why, granting that the magical act is regarded as occult, and as such falls into line with whatever else is occult and supernatural, its peculiar inwardness as revealed to the operator should be read into whatever else has the *prima facie* appearance of a quasi-personal exertion of supernatural power. After all, we know that, in point of fact, the savage is ready enough to put down whatever effects he cannot rationally account for (*e.g.* disease) to what may be termed sorcery in the abstract.

¹ *G. B.*,² i., 65-6, 69.

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But, once it is established that to feel like and inwardly be a supernatural agent is to feel oneself exerting the will-power of a human magician, then what more natural than that a human magician when in difficulties should seek, by any one of the many modes of entering into relations with the divine to reinforce his own *mana* from the boundless store of selfsame *mana* belonging to those magicians of a higher order whom, so to speak, he has created after his own image?

All this, however, I confess, it is easier to deduce than to verify. When we try to study the matter in the concrete, we soon lose our way amongst plural causes and intermixed effects. For instance, it is clear that the savage has inward experience of the supernormal, not only in his feats of projective magic, but likewise in his dreams, his fits of ecstasy, and so on (though these latter seem to have no place within the sphere of magic proper). Or again we have been dealing with the act of magic from the point of view of the operator. But there is also the point of view of the victim, whose suggestibility will, we may suppose, be largely conditioned by the amount of "asthenic" emotion—fear and fascination—induced in him. Hence any sort of association with the supernatural

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and awful which the sorcerer can establish will be all to the good. An all-round obscurantism and mystery-mongering is his policy, quite apart from the considerations that make his own acts mysterious to himself. However, the quotations cited by Dr Frazer from Dr Codrington seem fairly crucial as regards the hypothesis I am defending.¹ *Mana* is at all events the power which is believed to do the work in Melanesian magic, and to obtain *mana* on the other hand is the object of the rites and practices that make up what anthropologists will be ready to call Melanesian "religion." Or once more we seem to find exactly what we want in the following prayer of the Malay *pawang* at the grave of a murdered man: "Hearken, So-and-so, and assist me . . . I desire to ask for a little magic."² I submit, then, that *mana*, as I have interpreted it, yields the chief clue to the original use of names of power in connection with the spell, from "in the devil's name"³ to "Im Namen Jesu."⁴ Mr Skeat has compared the exorcising of disease-demons by invoking a spirit of some powerful wild beast, the elephant or the tiger, to the casting out of devils through Beelzebub their

¹ *G. B.*,² i., 65-6. Cf. the same authority in *J. A. I.*, xi., 309.

² *M. M.*, 60-1.

³ Cf. *G. B.*,² i., 121.

⁴ Cf. W. Heitmüller, *Im Namen Jesu*, Göttingen, 1903.

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prince.¹ Admitting the comparison to be just and apt, is there not at the back of this the notion of the magic-working power—the “control”—inherent in the supernatural being as such?² Secondary ideas will of course tend to superimpose themselves, as when, as Mr Skeat has abundantly shown, the magician invokes the higher power no longer as an ally, but rather as a shield. “It is not I who am burying him (in the form of a waxen image), it is Gabriel who is burying him.”³ Still Gabriel, I suggest, was primarily conceived as a magic-working power, and indeed as such is able to bear all responsibility on his broad shoulders. Compare the huntsman’s charm addressed to the (more or less divine) deer: “It is not I who am huntsman, it is Pawang Sidi (wizard Sidi) that is huntsman; It is not I whose dogs these are, it is Pawang Sakti (the ‘magic wizard’), whose dogs these are.”⁴

But I must move forward to another aspect of the inherent tendency of the magical instrument to generate religion. Instead of taking the form of a divine fellow-operator who backs the magician, the *mana* may instead associate itself so closely

¹ *Folk-Lore*, xiii., 159.

² The Malay charm-book quoted by Mr Skeat puts the matter typically, “God was the Eldest Magician.” *M.M.*, 2.

³ *M.M.*, 571. Cf. *G.B.*,² i., 11.

⁴ *Ib.*, 175.

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with the magician's symbol as to seem a god whose connection is with it rather than with him. The ultimate psychological reason for this must be sought, as I have already hinted, in the good workman's tendency to throw himself literally, as far as his consciousness goes, into the work before him. He is so much one in idea with his instrument that the *mana* in him is as easily represented as resident in it. Meanwhile the capacity of naïve thought to personify whatever has independent existence must help out the transference, as may be illustrated abundantly from such a magnificent collection of spells as we get in the *Golden Bough*. Contrast the following pair of cases. In West Africa, when a war party is on foot, the women dance with brushes in their hands, singing "Our husbands have gone to Ashantee land; may they sweep their enemies off the face of the earth."¹ In much the same way in the Kei Islands, when a battle is in progress, the women wave fans in the direction of the enemy. What they say, however, is, "O golden fans! let our bullets hit and those of the enemy miss."² We must not make too much of such a change from impersonal mention to personal address. It implies no more than a slight increase in vividness of idea. Still, as far as

¹ *G. B.*,² i., 34.

² *Ib.*, 33.

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it goes, I take it, it is all in the direction of that more emphatic kind of personification which gives the thing addressed enough soul of its own to enable it to possess *mana*. In the following Russian example we seem to see the instrument first created, then invested with personality, and lastly filled with *mana* more or less from without: "I attach five knots to each hostile infidel shooter. . . . Do ye, O knots, bar the shooter from every road and way. . . . In my knots lies hid the mighty strength of snakes—from the twelve-headed snake."¹ Here the *mana* is added more or less from without, for, though a knot is enough like a snake to generate the comparison, yet the twelve-headed snake sounds like an intensification definitely borrowed from mythology. The example, however, is not sufficiently primitive to bear close scrutiny as regards the thought it contains. On the other hand, the Australians are, in Dr Frazer's eyes at least, as primitive as you please, and it is precisely amongst them that he finds a magic free of religion. Yet Australia presents us with a crucial case of the deification of the magical instrument.

To punish their enemies the Arunta prepare a

¹ *G. B.*,² i., 399. Cf. iii., 360, which introduces us to a ten-headed serpent (Greek).

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magic spear. It is named the *arungquiltha*, this name, let us note, being equally applicable to the supernatural evil power that possesses anybody or anything, and to the person or object wherein it is permanently or for the time being resident. They then address it, "Go straight, go straight and kill him," and wait till the *arungquiltha* is heard to reply, "Where is he?"—being, we are told, "regarded in this instance as an evil spirit resident in the magic implement."¹ Thereafter a crash of thunder is heard, and a fiery appearance is seen streaking across the sky—a beautifully concrete image, by the way, of the projectiveness ascribed by the savage to his magic. It is but a step from this to the identification of the *arungquiltha* with comets and shooting-stars.² By a converse movement of mythologising thought, when a man wishes to charm a certain shell ornament, the *lonka-lonka*, so that it may gain him the affections of a woman, he sings over it certain words which convey an invitation to the lightning to come and dwell in the *lonka-lonka*. The supposed effect of this on the woman is precisely that we nowadays attribute to suggestion. She, though absent in her own camp, sees, with the inward eye as it were, since she alone sees it, the lightning flashing on the

¹ *Sp. and G.*, 548-9.

² *Ib.*, 550.

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lonka-lonka, "and all at once her internal organs shake with emotion."¹ Now why these easy transitions of thought from the magical instrument to a celestial portent, and *vice versa*, not to speak of the identification of *arungquiltha* with other manifestations of the supernatural embodied in stones, *alcheringa* animals, and what not?² Simply, I answer, because magic proper is all along an occult process, and as such part and parcel of the "god-stuff" out of which religion fashions itself. And more than this, by importing its peculiar projectiveness into the vague associations of the occult it provides one, though I do not say the only, centre round which those associations may crystallise into relatively clear, if even so highly fluid and unstable, forms. We may see why the medicine-man is so ready to press into his service that miscellaneous mass of "plant," dead men's bones, skins of strange animals, and what not; and why these objects in their turn come to be able to work miracles for themselves, and in fact develop into non-human medicine-men. But all these things were psychologically next door to impossible, if magic were in origin a mechanical "natural science" utterly alien in its inward essential nature to all religion, and as such capable only

¹ *Sp. and G.*, 545.

² *Ib.*, 550-1.

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of yielding to it as a substitute, and never of joining forces with it as ally and blood-relation. Surely, if we look at the matter simply from this side alone, the side of the instrument, there is enough evidence to upset the oil-and-water theory of Dr Frazer.

Before we leave the subject of the instrument let us finally note that concurrently with the personification and progressive deification of the instrument, as it may be called, the spell evolves into the prayer. Thus, on the one hand, the name of power associated with the spell, instead of being merely quoted so as by simple juxtaposition to add *mana* to *mana*, may be invoked as a personal agency by whose good grace the charm as a whole is caused to work. Dr Frazer provides us with an instance of this from the Kei Islands. When their lords are away fighting, the women, having anointed certain stones and fruits and exposed them on a board, sing: "O lord sun and moon let the bullets rebound from our husbands . . . just as raindrops rebound from these objects which are smeared with oil."¹ Dr Frazer speaks of "the prayer to the sun that he will be pleased to give effect to the charm" as "a religious and perhaps later addition." No doubt in a sense it is. We have seen reason to believe, however,

¹ G. B.,² i., 33.

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that such a development is natural to the spell; and this particular development would be especially natural if we regard the sun and moon as invoked not merely as magic-working powers in general, but as powers of the sky which send the rain and are thus decidedly suggested by the spell itself. At anyrate it seems quite certain that reflection on the occult working of a spell will generate the notion of external divine agency, and this notion in its turn give rise to prayer. Thus the New Caledonia rainmakers poured water over a skeleton so that it might run on to some taro leaves. "They believed that the soul of the deceased took up the water, converted it into rain, and showered it down again." From this belief it is but a step to prayer. And so we find that in Russia, where a very similar rite is practised, whilst some pour water on the corpse through a sieve, others beat it about the head, exclaiming, "Give us rain."¹ In these cases the power invoked is more or less external to the symbol. On the other hand, it may be identical with the symbol. Thus the Fanti wizard puts a crab into a hole in the ground over which the victim is about to pass, and sprinkles rum over it with the invocation: "O Crab-Fetish, when So-and-so walks over you,

¹ *G. B.*,² i., 100.

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may you take life from him.”¹ Here the crab, I suggest, was originally a magical symbol on a par with the stones which in Borneo serve to protect fruit trees, the idea of which is that the thief may suffer from stones in the stomach like to these. These Borneo stones are similarly treated as personal agencies. They are called on to witness the anathema. Or again, if a friend of the proprietor wishes to pluck the fruit, he first lights a fire and asks it to explain to the stones that he is no thief.² In short, there is fairly crucial evidence to show how naturally and insensibly the charm-symbol may pass into the idol.³ All that is needed is that there should be sufficient personification for prayer to be said.

It remains to speak very briefly of the corresponding personification and gradual deification of what in contrast to the “instrument” I have called the “end.” Now clearly the curtailed form of spell with suppressed protasis is to all outward appearance a prayer and nothing else. Take a single very simple example—the “Fruit, Fruit, Fruit, Fruit,” which we find at the end of

¹ *J. A. I.*, xxvi., 151. Cf. *G. B.*, ii., 69-70, where the divine cuttle-fish is propitiated, lest it make a cuttle-fish grow in the man's inside.

² *Ib.*, xxiii., 161.

³ Cf. Dr Haddon in *J. A. I.*, xix., 324.

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various Malay charms connected with the practice of "productive" magic.¹ According to our previous conclusions, however, this is no prayer so long as the force which sets the spell in motion is felt by the operator as an exertion of imperative will and an attempt to establish control. But, given a form of words which need suffer no change though the thought at the back of it alter, what more natural than that the mind of the charmer should fluctuate between "bluff" and blandishment, conjuration and cajolery?

Mr Skeat provides us with examples of how easily this transition effects itself in the course of one and the same ceremony. Thus "Listen, O listen, to my injunctions"—which is surely prayer—is immediately followed by threat backed by the name of power: "And if you hearken not to my instructions you shall be rebels in the sight of Allah."² And, that we need not suppose this transition to involve a change of mind from overweening pride of soul to humility and reverence,³ the same authority makes it clear that prayer may be resorted to as a trick, may be a

¹ Cf. Mr Skeat in *Folk-Lore*, xiii., 161. ² *Folk-Lore*, xiii., 142.

³ Contrast what Dr Frazer says about man's new-found sense of his own littleness, etc., *G. B.*,² i., 78.

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civil request that but masks a decoy,¹ a complication which in itself shows how artificial must ever be the distinction we draw, purely for our own classificatory purposes, between magic and religion. So far we have considered the transition from the side of the operator. And now look at it from the side of the patient or victim—the will he seeks to constrain. That it is truly as a will constrained, and not as a person conceived as equivalent to an inanimate thing, we have already argued. An example of the way the savage figures to himself the effects of the control he exerts was provided by the Arunta description of the woman who with the inward eye sees the lightning flashing on the *lonka-lonka*, and all at once her inward parts are shaken with the projected passion. Now savage thought finds no difficulty in postulating will constrained where we deny will and personality altogether. And, once personify, you are on the way to worship. Thus in China they sweep out the house and say, “Let the devil of poverty depart.”² In Timorlaut and Ceram they launch the disease boat, at the same time crying, “O sickness, go from here.”³ Already here we seem to find the spell-form changed over into the prayer-form. Meanwhile in Buro the same

¹ *M. M.*, 140, 308.

² *G. B.*,² iii., 83.

³ *Ib.*, 97-8.

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rite is accompanied by the invocation: "Grandfather Small-pox, go away."¹ Here the "Grandfather" is clearly indicative of the true spirit of prayer, as might be illustrated extensively. Or so again the magical ploughing of the Indian women is accompanied by what can only be described as a prayer to "Mother Earth."² Clearly the cults of the rice-mother, the maize-mother, the corn-mother, and so on, wherein magic is finally swallowed up in unmistakable religion, are the natural outcome of such a gradually-intensifying personification. But this personification in its turn would follow naturally upon that view of the magical act which we have all along assumed to have been its ground-idea, namely the view that it is an inter-personal, inter-subjective transaction, an affair between wills—something, therefore, generically akin to, if specifically distinct from, the relation which brings together the suppliant and his god.

One word only in conclusion. I have been dealing, let it be remembered in justice to my hypothesis, with this question of the relation of magic to religion, the spell to the prayer, *abstractly*. It is certain that religion cannot be identified merely with the worship directly generated by

¹ *G. B.*, 98.

² *Ib.*,² i., 99.

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magic. Religion is a far wider and more complex thing. Again, there may be other elements in magic than the one I have selected for more or less exclusive consideration. It is to some extent a matter of definition. For instance, divination may, or may not, be treated as a branch of magic. If it be so treated, we might, as has already been said, have to admit that, whereas one kind of magic develops directly out of quasi-instinctive practice, namely the act of primitive credulity, another kind of magic, divination, is originally due to some sort of dim theorising about causes, the theory engendering the practice rather than the practice the theory. Meanwhile, if out of the immense confusion of beliefs and rites which the student of savage superstition is called upon to face, we shall haply have contrived to isolate, and more or less consistently keep in view, a single abstract development of some intrinsic interest and importance, we shall have done very well. Every abstraction that is "won from the void and formless infinite" is of value in the present vague and shifting condition of anthropology. Dr Frazer's abstract contrast of magic and religion is a case in point. But abstraction needs to be qualified by abstraction that the ideal whole may at length be envisaged as a unity of many

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phases. My object throughout has been to show that, if from one point of view magic and religion must be held apart in thought, from another point of view they may legitimately be brought together.

IS TABOO A NEGATIVE MAGIC ?

IT is always easier to criticise than to construct. Many affirmative instances usually go to the founding of an induction, whereas a single contradictory case suffices to upset it. Meanwhile, in anthropology, it will not do to press a generalisation overmuch, for at least two reasons. The first of these reasons is the fundamental one that human history cannot be shown, or at anyrate has not hitherto been shown, to be subject to hard-and-fast laws. Hence we must cut our coat according to our cloth, and be fully content if our analysis of the ways and doings of man discloses tendencies of a well-marked kind. The second reason is that, in the present state of the science, field-work, rightly enough, predominates over study-work. Whilst the weather lasts and the crop is still left standing, garnering rather than threshing must remain the order of the day. Working hypotheses, therefore, the invention of theorists who are masters of their subject, are not so plentiful that we can afford to discard them at the first hint of an exception. If, then, some one comes forward to attack a leading view, it is not enough to arm himself with a few negative in-

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stances. It is likewise incumbent on the critic to provide another view that can serve as a substitute. In the present case I have sought to do this after a fashion, though I am painfully aware that, in defining taboo by means of *mana*, I am laying myself open to a charge of explaining *obscurum per obscurius*. I can only reply prophetically that the last word about *mana* has not yet been said; that it represents a genuine idea of the primitive mind, an idea no less genuine and no less widely distributed than the idea of taboo, as several writers have recently suggested, and as further investigation will, I believe, abundantly confirm. I would also rejoin that if the accusation of *obscurum per obscurius* hardly applies directly to the theory I am criticising—since to identify “magic” with the sympathetic principle yields a perfectly definite sense—yet the natural associations of the word are so much at variance with this abstract use of the name of a social institution that the expression “negative magic” is more likely to cause confusion than to clear it up.

So far back as when Dr Tylor published his epoch-making *Researches into the Early History of Mankind* we find the suggestion put forward of a certain community of principle between taboo and that “confusion of objective with subjective con-

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nection " which " may be applied to explain one branch after another of the arts of the sorcerer and diviner, till it almost seems as though we were coming near the end of his list, and might set down practices not based on this mental process as exceptions to a general rule."¹ " Many of the food prejudices of savage races," continues Dr Tylor, " depend on the belief which belongs to this class of superstitions, that the qualities of the eaten pass into the eater. Thus, among the Dayaks, young men sometimes abstain from the flesh of deer, lest it should make them timid, and before a pig-hunt they avoid oil, lest the game should slip through their fingers, and in the same way the flesh of slow-going and cowardly animals is not to be eaten by the warriors of South America; but they love the meat of tigers, stags, and boars, for courage and speed."²

Recently³ Dr Frazer has universalised Dr Tylor's partial correlation, and has pronounced " the whole doctrine of taboo " to be a negative magic, understanding by magic a misapplication of the association of ideas by similarity and contiguity. A very similar definition had already been proposed by MM. Hubert and Mauss.⁴ They

¹ *Op. cit.*, 3rd. edit., 129.

² *Ib.*, 131.

³ *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, 52.

⁴ *L'Année Sociologique*, vii., 56. It is to be noted that Dr Frazer arrived at his conclusion by independent means; cf. *Man*, 1906, 37.

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limit the identification, however, to what they name "sympathetic taboo," implying that taboo includes other varieties as well. Again, although here they seem to make the sympathetic principle the differentia of magic, the final gist of their admirable essay is rather to find this in the anti-social character ascribed to the magician's art.

Now, according to the foregoing view, taboo is a ceremonial abstinence based on the fear of definite consequences. Just as sympathetic magic says, "As I do this, so may that which this symbolises follow," taboo says, "I must not do this, lest there follow that which is the counterpart of this."

In violent contrast we have the view of Dr Jevons, which, at first sight at anyrate, seems to declare all consideration of consequences to be foreign to the taboo attitude. He bases his theory of taboo on an alleged "fact" that among savages universally there are some things which categorically and unconditionally "must not be done," insisting "that this feeling is a 'primitive' sentiment."¹ Now it is not easy to discover what is here meant, so great is the departure from the recognised terminology of philosophy. "Categorically" and "unconditionally" are expressions that smack of Kantian "rigorism"; but Kant's

¹ *An Introduction to the History of Religion*, 85.

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famous analysis of duty as a categorical and unconditional imperative makes obligation directly antagonistic to sentiment of all kinds. A sentiment as such has a history and assignable development. The Kantian law of duty, *a priori*, objective, absolute, has none whatever. Is Dr Jevons, then, speaking here strictly according to philosophic tradition? Or would he recognise a growth of moral principle, say, on some such lines as those which Dr Westermarck or Mr Hobhouse has recently laid down? If he were of the former persuasion, then he would be irrelevantly interpolating a non-genetic view of morality that for purposes of psychological and sociological explanation could have no value or significance at all. But if he is of the other and less uncompromising faith—which appears more probable, seeing that his book is professedly dealing with religion from the historical standpoint—then “categorical” and “unconditional,” in the application to a mere sentiment, are to be given an elastic sense. No more is meant, we must in that case suppose, than that the taboo feeling of “Do not meddle” involves no very explicit condition, no very clear or specific idea of unpleasant consequences to be avoided, but as it were threatens by aposiopesis—“Do not meddle, or, if you do, . . . !” If this is

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as much as Dr Jevons intends—and it seems at anyrate to be all that is meant by MM. Hubert and Mauss when they speak in very similar terms of the absolute, necessary, and *a priori* character of the “magical judgment”¹—then I think this view has very much to be said for it.

My own contention is that, whilst there is always a sanction at the back of taboo in the shape of some suggestion of mystic punishment following on a breach of the customary rule, yet the nature of the visitation in store for the offender is never a measurable quantity. Even when the penalty is apparently determinate and specific—which, however, is by no means always the case, as I shall endeavour to show later—an infinite *plus* of awfulness will, I believe, be found, on closer examination, to attach to it. Taboo, on my view, belongs, and belongs wholly, to the sphere of the magico-religious. Within that sphere, I venture to assert, man always feels himself to be in contact with powers whose modes of action transcend the ordinary and calculable. Though he does not on that account desist from attempting to exploit these powers, yet it is with no assurance of limited liability that he enters on the undertaking. In short, dealings with whatever has mystic power

¹ *Op. cit.*, vii., 125.

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are conducted at an indefinite risk; and taboo but embodies the resolution to take no unnecessary risks of this indefinite kind. This contention I shall now try to make good.

First, to attack the theory that taboo is negative magic (in Dr Frazer's sense of the term "magic") on the side on which that theory is strongest, namely where sympathy is most in evidence. I do not for one moment deny that in some taboos a sympathetic element is present and even prominent. Indeed, I see no harm in speaking, with MM. Hubert and Mauss, of sympathetic taboo, where "sympathetic" stands for the differentia or leading character of a variety, and the genus "taboo" is taken as already explained in independent terms. The presence of the sympathetic principle is, to my mind, amply and crucially proved in the case of those food restrictions mentioned in the passage quoted from Dr Tylor, the prohibition to eat deer lest one become timid, and so on. Another telling set of examples is provided by those remarkable taboos on the use of knots which, as Dr Frazer has abundantly shown, are wont to be observed at critical seasons such as those of child-birth, marriage, and death.¹ But even here, I suggest, the consequences tend to

¹ *The Golden Bough*,² i., 392 sqq.

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remain indefinite and vague, and that for more than one kind of reason.

We can distinguish a sociological reason and a hierological or religious reason, though for the purposes of the historical study of religion, from the standpoint of which taboo is usually considered, the first may be treated as subordinate to the second.

To begin with, these, no less than any other taboos, are customary observances, a portion of the unwritten law of society. To this fact, then, must be ascribed part at least of the force that renders them effective. There are always penalties of a distinctively social kind to be feared by the taboo-breaker. In extreme cases death will be inflicted; in all cases there will be more or less of what the Australian natives call "growling,"¹ and to bear up against public opinion is notoriously the last thing of which the savage is capable. Moreover, this social sanction is at the same time a religious sanction. To speak the language of a more advanced culture, State and Church being indivisibly one, to be outlaw is *ipso facto* to be excommunicate. Given the notion of mystic danger—of which more anon—social disapproval

¹ Cf. B. Spencer and F. Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*, 196.

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of all kinds will tend to borrow the tone and colour of religious aversion, the feeling that the offender is a source of spiritual peril to the community; whilst the sanctioning power remains social in the sense that society takes forcible means to remove the curse from its midst.

It may be argued that these social consequences of taboo-breaking are secondary, and thus scarcely bear on the question of the intrinsic nature of taboo. Such an objection, however, will not be admitted by anyone who has reflected at all deeply on the psychology of religion. On the broadest of theoretical grounds religion must be pronounced a product of the corporate life—a phenomenon of intercourse. Confirmation *a posteriori* is obtained by the examination of any particular taboos of which we have detailed information. Take, for example, the elaborate list of food-restrictions imposed amongst the Arunta on the *ulpmerka* or boy who has not yet been circumcised.¹ The sympathetic principle is probably not absent, though its action happens here not to be easily recognisable. When we learn, however, that

¹ Spencer and Gillen, *op. cit.*, 470 *sqq.* Here, by the way, in the systematic assignment of penalties to offences we seem to have a crucial disproof of the pure “unconditionality” of taboo.

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eating parrots or cockatoos will produce a hollow on the top of the head and a hole in the chin, we may suspect that the penalty consists in becoming like a parrot or cockatoo. On the other hand, the same penalty, for instance premature old age, follows on so many different kinds of transgression that it looks here as if a tendency to dispense with particular connections and generalise the effects of mystic wrong-doing were at work. Meanwhile, in regard to all these taboos alike our authorities assure us that the underlying idea throughout is that of reserving the best kinds of food for the use of the elder men, and of thereby disciplining the novice and teaching him to "know his place." Here is a social reason with a vengeance. Even if some suspect that our authorities over-estimate the influence of conscious design upon tribal custom, they will hardly go the length of asserting that sympathy pure and simple has automatically generated a code so favourable to the elderly *gourmet*. A number of succulent meats to be reserved on the one hand, a number of diseases and malformations held in dread by the tribe on the other, and possibly a few sympathetic connections established by tradition between certain foods and certain diseases to serve them as a pattern—with this as their pre-existing material the

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Australian greybeards, from all we know about them, would be quite capable of constructing a taboo-system, the efficient cause of which is not so much mystic fear as statecraft. Even if the principle of sympathy lurk in the background, we may be sure that the elders are not applying it very consciously or very strictly; and again we may be sure that society in imposing its law on the *ulpmerka* is at much greater pains to make it clear that he must not eat such and such than why he must not—if only because there are so many excellent reasons of a social kind why the young should not ask questions, but simply do as they are bidden.

But there is, I believe, another and a deeper reason why sympathy pure and simple cannot account for taboo. Taboo, I take it, is always something of a mystic affair. But I cannot see why there should be anything mystic about sympathy understood, as Dr Frazer understands it, simply as a misapplication of the laws of the association of ideas. After all, the association of ideas is at the back of all our thinking (though by itself it will not account for any of our thinking); and thinking as such does not fall within the sphere of the mystic. Or does the mystery follow from the fact that it is a “misapplication” of the

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laws aforesaid? ¹ Then the savage must be aware that he is misapplying these laws; for taboo is for him a mystic affair. But if he knows he is indulging in error, why does he not mend his ways? Clearly Dr Frazer cannot mean his explanation of magic or of taboo to be an explanation of what it is for the savage. Now, perhaps he is entitled to say that magic, in his sense, is not a savage concept or institution at all, but merely a counter for the use of the psychology that seeks to explain the primitive mind not from within but from without. He is, however, certainly not entitled to say that taboo is not a savage concept or institution. In Polynesia *tapu* is a well-recognised term that serves as perhaps the chief nucleus of embryonic reflection with regard to mystic matters of all kinds; in some of the islands the name stands for the whole system of religion.² Moreover, from every quarter of the primitive

¹ Dr Frazer writes, *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, 53, "It is not a taboo to say, 'Do not put your hand in the fire'; it is a rule of common sense, because the forbidden action entails a real, not an imaginary, evil." It is not a taboo, but a rule of common prudence, for the savage. But not for the reason alleged. In his eyes there is nothing imaginary, but something terribly real, about the death or other disaster he observes to overtake the taboo-breaker. How, then, does he come to bring this kind of evil under a category of its own? Surely it ought to be the prime concern of Anthropology to tell us that.

² Cf. E. Tregear, *Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary* s.v. *tapu*.

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world we get expressions that bear the closest analogy to this word. How then are we to be content with an explanation of taboo that does not pretend to render its sense as it has sense for those who both practise it and make it a rallying-point for their thought on mystic matters? As well say that taboo is "superstition" as that it is "magic" in Dr Frazer's sense of the word. We ask to understand it, and we are merely bidden to despise it.

If, on the other hand, we cast about amongst genuine primitive notions for such as may with relative appropriateness be deemed equivalent to the idea of magic, as that idea is to be understood and employed by a psychology that tries to establish community between savage and civilised thought, we have the choice between two alternative types.

My own preference is for those primitive expressions that are definitely dyslogistic or condemnatory, as when we speak of the "black art." The clearest cases that I know are Australian. Thus the *arungquilha* of the Arunta is "associated at bottom with the possession of supernatural evil power."¹ Perhaps we may say broadly that, as contrasted with *churinga*, the term stands for

¹ Spencer and Gillen, *op. cit.*, 548 n.

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magic as opposed to religion—for magic, that is, as the witch-haunted England of the seventeenth century understood it, namely as something anti-social and wholly bad. The Kaitish *ittha* seems to be the exact analogue of *arungquiltha*;¹ and so do the *muparn* of the Yerklaming, ² the *mung* of the Wurunjerri,³ and the *gubburra* of the Yuin.⁴ In all these cases the notion seems to be that of a wonder-working of a completely noxious kind. Amongst the Arunta a man caught practising such magic is severely punished, and probably killed.⁵

Some, however, might choose rather to assign the meaning of “ magic ” to the wonder-working in general, and not simply to its bad variety. Thus amongst the last-mentioned Yuin “ evil magic ” may be practised by the *gommera* or medicine-man; but in this tribe he is the leader of society, and a wielder of good supernatural power no less than of evil. The wonder-working power he possesses goes by the comprehensive name of *joia*, translated “ magic ” by Howitt, and described as an “ immaterial force ” set in motion not only by the *gommera* but also by certain sacred

¹ Spencer and Gillen, *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, 464 n.

² A. W. Howitt, *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, 450.

³ *Op. cit.*, 365.

⁴ *Ib.*, 372.

⁵ Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes*, 536.

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animals.¹ Here we seem to have a case of that very widespread notion of which the most famous representatives are the *mana* of the Pacific and the *orenda* of the Iroquois. A good deal of attention has lately been paid by anthropologists to these latter expressions, and I may perhaps be permitted to take certain of their findings for granted. It would appear that the root-idea is that of power—a power manifested in sheer luck, no doubt, as well as in cunning, yet, on the whole, tending to be conceived as a psychic energy, almost, in fact, as what we would call “will-power.”² Further, though it may be that every being possesses its modicum of *mana*, the tendency is for the word to express extraordinary power, in short a wonder-working.

Now between the ordinary and the extraordinary, the work-a-day and the wonderful is a difference, if you will, of degree rather than of kind. The sphere of the miraculous is, subjectively, just the

¹ *Op. cit.*, 533, 560-1.

² It is very interesting to note, as Tregear's excellent dictionary, s.v. *mana*, enables one to do at a glance, how the root *mana* underlies an immense number of the terms by which psychical faculties and states are rendered. Thus in Samoan we find *mana'o* to desire, wish, *manatu* to think, *manamea* to love, *atuamanatu* to have a good memory; in Tahitian *manao* to think, *manavaru* eager desire; in Hawaiian *manao* to think, *mananao* thought, *manaoio* to believe, *manaiva* feelings, affections; and so on.

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sphere of a startled experience, and clearly there are endless degrees in the intensity of felt surprise; though society tends to fix hard-and-fast limits within which surprise is, so to speak, expected of one. How the savage proceeds to differentiate the normal from the abnormal was brought home to me in the course of an interview I was accorded by the Pygmy "chief" Bokane.¹ I was trying to verify Col. Harrison's statement² that if a Pygmy dies suddenly the body is cut in two to see whether or not the death is caused by *oudah*—the "devil," as Col. Harrison renders it, though, for my part, I could not discover the slightest trace of personality attaching to this evil principle.³ I asked Bokane how his people told whether the death was due to *oudah* or not. He replied that, if an arrow-head or a large thorn were found inside the body, it was an arrow or a thorn that had killed the man; but, if nothing could be found, then *oudah* must have done it. If a dangerous animal killed a man, I learnt on further inquiry, it was not *oudah*, but it was *oudah* if you cut your finger accidentally.

¹ I spent about five hours in all in private talk with the Pygmies, assisted, I need hardly say, by an interpreter, at Olympia in London, Jan. 8 and 9, 1907.

² *Life among the Pygmies*, Lond., 1906, 20.

³ Nothing, apparently, is done to avert or propitiate *oudah*. Bokane denied that the pots of honey placed at the foot of trees were for *oudah*.

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When strange sounds were heard in the forest at night and the dogs howled, that was *oudah*. On some such lines as these, then, we may suppose other savages also to have succeeded in placing the strange and unaccountable under a category of its own. In the case of *mana* and *orenda* I am inclined to think that the core of the notion is provided by the wonderful feats—wonderful to himself, no doubt, as well as to his audience—of the human magician; which notion is then extended to cover wonder-working animals, nature-powers, and the like by an anthropomorphism which is specifically a “magomorphism,” so to say. Of course other elements beside that of sheer surprise at the unusual enter into the composition of a predominant notion such as that of *mana*, which in virtue of its very predominance is sure to attract and attach to itself all manner of meanings floating in its neighbourhood. For example, as the history of the word “mystic” reminds us, the wonderful and the secret or esoteric tend to form one idea. The Australian wonder-worker owes no little of his influence over the minds of his fellows to the fact that in most tribes an exhibition of his power forms part and parcel of the impressive mystery of initiation. Let it suffice, however, for our present purpose to identify *mana* with a

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wonder-working power such as that of the magician—a power that may manifest itself in actions of the sympathetic type, but is not limited to this type, being all that for the primitive mind is, or promises to be, extraordinarily effective in the way of the exertion of personal, or seemingly personal, will-force.

Now, if “magic” is to mean *mana* (which, however, is not Dr Frazer’s sense of “magic,” nor, indeed, mine, since I prefer to give it the uniformly bad meaning of *arungquilha*, that is, of the anti-social variety of *mana*), then in describing taboo as negative magic we shall not, I believe, be far wide of the mark. Taboo I take to be a mystic affair. To break a taboo is to set in motion against oneself mystic wonder-working power in one form or another. It may be of the wholly bad variety. Thus it is taboo for the headman of the water-totem in the Kaitish tribe to touch a pointing-stick lest the “evil magic” in it turn all the water bad.¹ On the other hand, many tabooed things, woman’s blood or the king’s touch, have power to cure no less than to kill; whilst an almost wholly beneficent power such as the clan-totem or the personal *manitu* is neverthe-

¹ Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes*, 463.

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less taboo.¹) Indeed, it is inevitable that, whenever society prescribes a taboo in regard to some object in particular, that object should tend to assume a certain measure of respectability as an institution, a part of the social creed; and, as the law upholds it, so it will surely seem in the end to uphold the law by punishing its infraction. It is to be remarked, however, that many taboos prescribed by the primitive society have regard to no object in particular, but are of the nature of general precautions against mystic perils all and sundry, the vaporous shapes conjured up by unreasoning panic. It is instructive in this context to consult the admirable account given by Mr Hodson of the communal taboos or *gennas* observed throughout the Manipur region.² On all sorts of occasions the *gennabura* or religious head of the village ordains that the community shall keep a *genna*. The village gates are closed, and the friend outside must stay there, whilst the stranger who is within remains. The men cook and eat apart from the women during this time.

¹ Is Dr Frazer henceforth prepared to explain totemism on purely sympathetic principles? It would, on the other hand, be easy to show that the ideas of *mana* and of *manitu* and the like go very closely together.

² T. C. Hodson, "The 'Genna' amongst the Tribes of Assam," *J. A. I.*, xxxvi., 92 *sqq.*

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The food taboos are strictly enforced.¹ All trade, all fishing, all hunting, all cutting of grass and felling of trees are forbidden. And why these precautions? Sometimes a definite visitation will have occurred. "Phenomena such as earthquakes and eclipses, or the destruction of a village by fire, occasion general *gennas*. . . . We also find general *gennas* occasioned by the death of a man from wounds inflicted by an enemy or by a wild animal, by the death of a man from snakebite or from cholera or small-pox, or by the death of a woman in child-birth."² At other times nothing untoward has happened, but something important and "ticklish" has to be done—the crops sown, the ghosts laid of those who have died during the year. It is a moment of crisis, and the tribal nerves are on the stretch. Mr Hodson, indeed, expressly notes that "the effect of *gennas* is certainly to produce in those engaged in them a tension which is of great psychological interest."³

¹ Some of these food taboos have a sympathetic character. Thus "young unmarried girls are not allowed to taste the flesh of the male of any animal or of female animals which have been killed while with young," *Id.*, 98. Even here, however, an element of miracle enters, unless the Manipuris find parthenogenesis no more odd than the Arunta are by some supposed to do. Another taboo is on dog's flesh, the mystic penalty being an eruption of boils. Here there is no obvious sympathetic connection. Boils are uncanny, and have to be accounted for on mystic lines—if not sympathetically, yet by some reference to evil magic; for disease is always evil magic for the savage; cf. Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes*, 548.

² *Id.*, 96.

³ *Id.*, 101.

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Is not what he takes for the effect rather the cause of *gennas*? Anxiety says, "Let us abstain from all acts that may bring upon us the ill-will of the powers." Anxiety sees every outlet of activity blocked by a dim shape, endowed with no definite attributes such as the sympathetic theory is obliged to postulate, but stationed there as simply a nameless representative of the environing Unknown with its quite unlimited power of bringing the tribal *mana*—its luck and cunning—to nought by an output of superior *mana*, to be manifested who knows how?

It may be objected that, whereas we have made it of the very essence of *mana* that it should be indefinite and mysterious in its effects, there can be nothing indefinite or mysterious on the Dyak view—to recur to the example from which we started—about the effect of deer-meat, since it produces timidity exactly as it might be thought to produce indigestion. Perhaps it is enough to reply that to the savage a fit of indigestion would likewise be a phenomenon explicable only in mystic terms. The common sense of the primitive man may—to take Dr Frazer's instance—recognise that normally and as a matter of course the fire burns whoever thrusts his fingers into it; but the moment that the fire burns someone "acci-

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dently," as we say, the savage mind scents a mystery. Just so for the Pygmy. His knife acts normally so long as it serves him to trim his arrow-shaft. As soon, however, as it slips and cuts his hand, there is *oudah* in, or at the back of, the "cussed" thing. Given, then, anything that behaves "cussedly" with regularity, that is normally abnormal in its effects, so to speak, and a taboo or customary avoidance will be instituted. It becomes the duty of society to its members to keep before their eyes the nature of the direful consequences attending violation of the rule. Society shakes its head solemnly at careless youth, and mutters *μορμώ*. Careless youth does not believe all it is told, yet is nevertheless impressed and, on the whole, abstains. Kafir children must not eat certain small birds.¹ If they catch them on the veld, they must take them to their grandparents, who alone may eat the body, though the children are given back the head. "If the parents catch children eating birds on the veld, they tell them they will turn out witches or wizards when they grow up." Here we have the mysticsanction. And there is a social sanction in reserve. "The boys naturally get sound thrashings from their fathers, who feel it their duty to prevent their sons

¹ Dudley Kidd, *Savage Childhood, a Study of Kafir Children*, 193.

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from turning out abandoned wretches in after life." Nevertheless, youth is sceptical, or at any-rate intractable. "Children do not see the logic of this rule, and consequently try to eat the bird on the veld, when they think they will not be found out. . . . There is no time when boys and girls are so free from observation as when watching the fields; consequently, at such times they have glorious feasts off the birds they catch." Now the sympathetic principle may underlie this food taboo, or it may not, but clearly by itself it is not enough to account for the customary observance in the concrete. Society has to keep the taboo going, so to say; and to keep it going it relies partly on the *vis a tergo* of brute force, but still more on the suggestion of mystic evil in store for the offender, not an imaginary evil, *pace* Dr Frazer, but what is quite another thing, an evil that appeals to the imagination, an indefinite, unmeasured, pregnant evil, a visitation, a doom, a judgment.

Hitherto we have had in view mainly such cases of taboo as seemed most closely bound up with the sympathetic principle, minor matters of routine for the most part, outlying and relatively isolated portions of the social system, which for that reason might be expected to contain their own *raison d'être* unaffected by the transforming influence of

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any higher synthesis. If, however, we turn to the major taboos of primitive society, the classical well-nigh universal cases of the woman shunned, the stranger banned, the divine chief isolated, and so on, how infinitely more difficult does it become to conceive sympathy, and sympathy only, as the continuously, or even the originally, efficient cause of the avoidance. Unfortunately, considerations of space utterly prohibit a detailed treatment of matters covering so wide an area both of fact and of hypothesis. It must suffice here to assert that the principles already laid down will be found to apply to these major taboos with even greater cogency. Here, too, there are at work both a social and a mystic sanction (so far as these can be kept apart in thought, the mystic sanction being but the voice of society uttering bodings instead of threats). As for the mystic sanction, we shall probably not be far wrong if we say that the woman has *mana*, the stranger has *mana*, the divine chief has *mana*, and for that reason pre-eminently are one and all taboo for those who have the best right to determine the meaning of taboo, namely those who practise and observe it.

If there were room left in which to consider these taboos in some detail—the three notable cases

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mentioned do not, of course, by any means complete the list of taboos of the first rank ¹—it might turn out that in our running fight with the upholders of the sympathetic theory serious opposition must be encountered at certain points, yet never so serious, let us hope, that it might not be eventually overcome.

Thus the first case on our list—that of the taboo on woman—provides our opponents with a really excellent chance of defending their position. There can be no doubt that a sympathetic interpretation is often put upon this taboo by savages themselves. Mr Crawley, who has made the subject of what he terms the sexual taboo peculiarly his own, brings forward evidence that, to my mind at least, is conclusive on this point.² Among the Barea man and wife seldom share the same bed, the reason they give being that “the breath of the wife weakens her husband.” Amongst the Omahas if a boy plays with girls he is dubbed “hermaphrodite.” In the Wiraijuri ~~tabe~~ boys are reprovod for playing with girls, and the culprit

¹ Thus one of the most notable and widespread of taboos is that on the dead. Sympathetic interpretations of this taboo are by no means unknown amongst savages, but it would not be hard to show that they do not exhaust the mystery of death, of all human concepts the most thickly enwrapped in imaginative atmosphere.

² E. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose*, 93, cf. 207 sqq.

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is taken aside by an old man, who solemnly extracts from his legs some "strands of the woman's apron" which have got in. And so on in case after case. Here clearly what is primarily feared is the transmission of womanly characteristics, in a word, of effeminacy. Mr Crawley even goes so far as to speak of the belief in such transmission as "the chief factor in sexual taboo."¹ Whether this be so or not,² he likewise shows, with singular clearness and force, that it is not the only factor. Owing, he thinks, to a natural nervousness that one sex feels towards the other, as well as to the unaccountable nature of various phenomena in the life-history of woman such as menstruation and child-birth, the notion of her as simply the weaker vessel "is merged in another conception of woman as a 'mysterious' person. . . . She is more or less of a potential witch."³ With this I cordially agree, and shall not labour the point more except to the extent of asking the question, How, on the

¹ E. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose*, 207.

² Mr Crawley does not tell us on what principle he would proceed to estimate predominance as between such factors: I should have thought that the moral of his excellent study, abounding as it does in psychological insight, was to lay stress on the subconscious grounds of action rather than on the reasons whereby more or less *ex post facto* the dawning reflection of the savage seeks to interpret and justify that action. I myself believe the sympathetic explanation to be little more than such an *ex post facto* justification of a mystic avoidance already in full swing.

³ *Ib.*, 206.

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hypothesis that what is dreaded is simply the transmission of womanliness, are we to account for the fact—to quote but the best-known story of the kind—that when an Australian black-fellow discovered his wife to have lain on his blanket he wholly succumbed to terror and was dead within a fortnight?¹ Only a twilight fear, a measureless horror, could thus kill. And to show how mixed a mode of thought prevails as to the workings of the sanction set in motion, in a very similar case from Assam it is not the man but the woman who dies of fright.²

The case of the taboo on strangers seems at first sight to afford a clear proof of the effect of mere strangeness in exciting dread, especially when we compare the results of contact with novelties of all kinds. Dr Jevons, however, argues that “strangers are not inherently taboo, but, as belonging to strange gods, bring with them strange supernatural influences.”³ In support of this view he instances the fact that newcomers are frequently fumigated to drive away the evil influences they bear in their train. But, after all, there are no taboos that religion has not learnt to neutralise by means of one or another ceremonial device.

¹ *J. A. I.*, ix., 458.

² Hodson, *op. cit.*, 100.

³ *An Introduction to the History of Religion*, 71.

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Woman, for example, is inherently taboo, yet with proper precautions she may be married.¹ So too, then, strangers may be entertained after a purifying ceremony. It by no means follows, however, that they have lost all their mystic virtue, any more than it follows that woman has ceased to be mysterious after the marriage ceremony. Witness the power to bless or to curse retained by the stranger within the gate—a matter for the first time brought clearly to light by Dr Westermarck's striking investigation of the religious basis of primitive hospitality.² Meanwhile, even if Dr Jevons's contention were to be granted that the taboo on strangers is really a taboo on the tabooed things he may have been in contact with, it is hard to see how the sympathetic explanation of taboo is going to be stretched to cover the indefinite possibility of definite sympathetic contagions of all sorts. We are left asking why mere uncertainty in itself can rouse imaginative fears—a line of inquiry that must presently lead to the conclusion that mere strangeness in itself can do the same.

¹ I accept Mr Crawley's hypothesis that "marriage ceremonies neutralise the dangers attaching to union between the sexes." *The Mystic Rose*, 322.

² E. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, i., 583 *sqq.* Dr Westermarck's view, by the way, is that "the unknown stranger, like everything unknown and everything strange, arouses a feeling of mysterious awe in superstitious minds."

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The third of our cases—that of the tabooed chief—need not detain us long. At all events in Polynesia, the eponymous home of taboo, they have no doubt about the explanation. The chief has *mana*, and therefore he is feared. Men do not dread contact with the king lest they become kingly, but lest they be blasted by the superman's supermanliness. Such, at least, is the native theory of the kingly taboo on its religious side. On its highly developed social side it is a fear of the strong arm of the State mingled with a respect for established authority—just as religious taboo is for the most part not all cringing terror, but rather an awe as towards mystic powers recognised by society and as such tending to be reputable.

We have cast but a rapid glance over an immense subject. We have but dipped here and there almost at random amongst the endless facts bearing on our theme to see if the sympathetic principle—a perfectly genuine thing in its way—would take us to the bottom of the taboo feeling and idea. We conclude provisionally that it will not. Indefinite rather than definite consequences appear to be associated with the violation of a taboo, and that because what is dreaded is essentially a mysterious power, something arbitrary and unaccountable in its modes of action. Is, then,

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taboo a negative *mana* ? Yes—if *mana* be somewhat liberally interpreted. Is it a negative magic, understanding by magic sympathetic action? With all my respect and admiration for the great authority who has propounded the hypothesis, I must venture to answer—No.

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IT is no part of my present design to determine, by an exhaustive analysis of the existing evidence, how the conception of *mana* is understood and applied within its special area of distribution, namely the Pacific region. Such a task pertains to Descriptive Ethnology; and it is rather to a problem of Comparative Ethnology that I should like to call your attention. I propose to discuss the value—that is to say, the appropriateness and the fruitfulness—of either this conception of *mana* or some nearly equivalent notion, such as the Huron *orenda*, when selected by the science of Comparative Religion to serve as one of its categories, or classificatory terms of the widest extension.

Now any historical science that adopts the Comparative Method stands committed to the postulate that human nature is sufficiently homogeneous and uniform to warrant us in classifying its tendencies under formulæ coextensive with the whole broad field of anthropological research.

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Though the conditions of their occurrence cause our data to appear highly disconnected, we claim, even if we cannot yet wholly make good, the right to bind them together into a single system of reference by means of certain general principles. By duly constructing such theoretical bridges, as Dr Frazer is fond of calling them, we hope eventually to transform, as it were, a medley of insecure, insignificant sandbanks into one stable and glorious Venice.

So much, then, for our scientific ideal. But some sceptical champion of the actual may be inclined to ask: "Are examples as a matter of fact forthcoming, at anyrate from within the particular department of Comparative Religion, of categories or general principles that, when tested by use, prove reasonably steadfast?" To this challenge it may be replied that, even when we limit ourselves to the case of what may be described as "rudimentary" religion—in regard to which our terminology finds itself in the paradoxical position of having to grapple with states of mind themselves hardly subject to fixed terms at all—there are at all events distinguishable degrees of value to be recognised amongst the categories in current employment. Thus most of us will be agreed that, considered as a head of general

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classification, "*tabu*" works well enough, but "totem" scarcely so well, whilst "fetish" is perhaps altogether unsatisfactory. Besides, there is at least one supreme principle that has for many years stood firm in the midst of these psychological quicksands. Dr Tylor's conception of "animism" is the crucial instance of a category that successfully applies to rudimentary religion taken at its widest. If our science is to be compared to a Venice held together by bridges, then "animism" must be likened to its Rialto.

At the same time, "lest one good custom should corrupt the world," we need plenty of customs; and the like holds true of categories. In what follows I may seem to be attacking "animism," in so far as I shall attempt to endow "*mana*" with classificatory authority to some extent at the expense of the older notion. Let me, therefore, declare at the outset that I should be the last to wish our time-honoured Rialto to be treated as an obsolete or obsolescent structure. If I seek to divert from it some of the traffic it is not naturally suited to bear, I am surely offering it no injury, but a service.

One word more by way of preface. There are those who dislike the introduction of native terms into our scientific nomenclature. The local and general usages, they object, tend to become

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confused. This may, indeed, be a real danger. On the other hand, are we not more likely to keep in touch with the obscure forces at work in rudimentary religion, if we make what use we can of the clues lying ready to hand in the recorded efforts of rudimentary reflection upon religion? The *mana* of the Pacific may be said, I think, without exaggeration to embody rudimentary reflection—to form a piece of subconscious philosophy. To begin with, the religious eye perceives the presence of *mana* here, there, and everywhere. In the next place, *mana* has worked its way into the very heart of the native languages, where it figures as more than one part of speech, and abounds in secondary meanings of all kinds. Lastly, whatever the word may originally have signified (as far as I know, an unsettled question), it stands in its actual use for something lying more or less beyond the reach of the senses—something verging on what we are wont to describe as the immaterial or unseen. All this, however, hardly amounts to a proof that *mana* has acquired in the aboriginal mind the full status of an abstract idea. For instance, whereas a Codrington might decide in comprehensive fashion that all Melanesian religion consists in getting *mana* for oneself,¹ it is

¹ R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), 119 n.

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at least open to doubt whether a Melanesian sage could have arrived, unassisted, at a generalisation so abstract—a “bird’s-eye view” so detached from confusing detail. Nevertheless, we may well suspect some such truth as this to have long been more or less inarticulately felt by the Melanesian mind. In fact, I take it, there would have been small difficulty on Bishop Codrington’s part in making an intelligent native realise the force of his universal proposition. What is the moral of this? Surely, that the science of Comparative Religion should strive to explicate the meaning inherent in any given phase of the world’s religious experience in just those terms that would naturally suggest themselves, suppose the phase in question to be somehow quickened into self-consciousness and self-expression. Such terms I would denominate “sympathetic”; and would, further, hazard the judgment that, in the case of all science of the kind, its use of sympathetic terms is the measure of its sympathetic insight. *Mana*, then, I contend, has, despite its exotic appearance, a perfect right to figure as a scientific category by the side of *tabu*—a term hailing from the same geographical area—so long as a classificatory function of like importance can be found for it. That function let us now proceed, if so may be, to discover.

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Codrington defines *mana*, in its Melanesian use, as follows: "a force altogether distinct from physical power, which acts in all kinds of ways for good and evil, and which it is of the greatest advantage to possess or control"; or again he says: "It is a power or influence, not physical, and in a way supernatural; but it shows itself in physical force, or in any kind of power or excellence which a man possesses." It is supernatural just in this way, namely, that it is "what works to effect everything which is beyond the ordinary power of men, outside the common processes of nature." He illustrates his point by examples: "If a man has been successful in fighting, it has not been his natural strength of arm, quickness of eye, or readiness of resource that has won success; he has certainly got the *mana* of a spirit or of some deceased warrior to empower him, conveyed in an amulet of a stone round his neck, or a tuft of leaves in his belt, in a tooth hung upon a finger of his bow hand, or in the form of words with which he brings supernatural assistance to his side. If a man's pigs multiply, and his gardens are productive, it is not because he is industrious and looks after his property, but because of the stones full of *mana* for pigs and yams that he possesses. Of course a yam naturally grows when planted, that is wel

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known, but it will not be very large unless *mana* comes into play; a canoe will not be swift unless *mana* be brought to bear upon it, a net will not catch many fish, nor an arrow inflict a mortal wound.”¹

From Polynesia comes much the same story. Tregear in his admirable comparative dictionary of the Polynesian dialects² renders the word, which may be either noun or adjective, thus: “supernatural power; divine authority; having qualities which ordinary persons or things do not possess.” He seems to distinguish, however, what might be called a “secular” sense, in which the term stands generally for “authority,” or, as an adjective, for “effectual, effective.” He cites copious instances from the various dialects to exemplify the supernatural mode of *mana*. Thus the word is applied, in Maori, to a wooden sword that has done deeds so wonderful as to possess a sanctity and power of its own; in Samoan, to a parent who brings a curse on a disobedient child; in Hawaiian, to the gods, or to a man who by his death gives efficacy to an idol; in Tongan, to whoever performs miracles, or bewitches; in Mangarevan, to a magic staff given

¹ Codrington, *op. cit.*, 118-20.

² E. Tregear, *The Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary* (Wellington, N. Z., 1891), s.v. *mana*.

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to a man by his grandfather, or, again, to divination in general; and so forth. In short its range is as wide as those of divinity and witchcraft taken together. If, on the other hand, we turn to what I have called the secular sense attributed to *mana*, as, for example, when it is used of a chief, a healer of maladies, a successful pleader, or the winner of a race, we perceive at once that the distinction of meaning holds good for the civilised lexicographer rather than for the unsophisticated native. The chief who can impose *tabu*, the caster-out of disease-devils, and, in hardly less a degree, the man who can exercise the magic of persuasion, or who can command the luck which the most skilled athlete does not despise, is for the Polynesian mind not metaphorically "gifted" or "inspired," but literally. Of course, as in Europe, so in Polynesia the coin of current usage may have become clipped with lapse of time. Thus Plato tells us that both the Spartans and the Athenian ladies of his day used to exclaim of any male person they happened to admire, *θεῖος ἀνὴρ*, "what a divine man!"¹ It need not surprise us, therefore, that in Mangarevan you may say of any number over forty *manamanana*—an "awful" lot, in fact. Such an exception, however, can

¹ Plato, *Meno* 99 D.

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scarcely be allowed to count against the generalisation that, throughout the Pacific region, *mana* in its essential meaning connotes what both Codrington and Tregrear describe as the supernatural.

Now mark the importance of this in view of the possible use of *mana* as a category of Comparative Religion. Comparative Religion, I would maintain, at all events so long as it is seeking to grapple with rudimentary or protoplasmic types of religious experience, must cast its net somewhat widely. Its interest must embrace the whole of one, and, perhaps, for savagery the more considerable, of the two fundamental aspects under which his experience or his universe (we may express it either way) reveals itself to the rudimentary intelligence of man. What to call this aspect, so as to preserve the flavour of the aboriginal notion, is a difficulty, but a difficulty of detail. The all-important matter is to establish by induction that such an aspect is actually perceived at the level of experience I have called "rudimentary." This, I believe, can be done. I have, for instance, shown elsewhere that even the Pygmy, a person perhaps not overburdened with ideas, possesses in his notion of *oudah* an inkling of the difference that marks off the one province of experience from the other. Of course he cannot

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deal with *oudah* abstractly; provinces of experience and the like are not for him. But I found that, when confronted with particular cases, or rather types of case, my Pygmy friend could determine with great precision whether *oudah* was there or not. What practical results, if any, would be likely to flow from this effort of discernment my knowledge of Pygmy customs, unfortunately, does not enable me to say; but I take it that the conception is not there for nothing. I shall assume, then, that an inductive study of the ideas and customs of savagery will show, firstly, that an awareness of a fundamental aspect of life and of the world, which aspect I shall provisionally term "supernatural," is so general as to be typical, and, secondly, that such an awareness is no less generally bound up with a specific group of vital reactions.

As to the question of a name for this aspect different views may be held. The term our science needs ought to express the bare minimum of generic being required to constitute matter for the experience which, taken at its highest, though by no means at its widest, we call "religious." "Raw material for good religion and bad religion, as well as for magic white or black"—how are we going to designate that in a phrase? It will not

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help us here, I am afraid, to cast about amongst native words. Putting aside *oudah* as too insignificant and too little understood to be pressed into this high service, I can find nothing more nearly adapted to the purpose than the Siouan *wakan* or *wakanda*; of which M'Gee writes: "the term may be translated into 'mystery' perhaps more satisfactorily than in [*sic*] any other single English word, yet this rendering is at the same time too limited, as *wakanda* vaguely denotes also power, sacred, ancient, grandeur, animate, immortal."¹ But when vagueness reaches this pitch, it is time, I think, to resort to one of our own more clear-cut notions. Amongst such notions that of "the supernatural" stands out, in my opinion, as the least objectionable. Of course it is our term; that must be clearly understood. The savage has no word for "nature." He does not abstractly distinguish between an order of uniform happenings and a higher order of miraculous happenings. He is merely concerned to mark and exploit the difference when presented in the concrete. As Codrington says: "A man comes by chance upon a stone which takes his fancy; its shape is singular, it is like something, it is

¹ W. J. M'Gee, *Fifteenth Annual Report of the U.S. Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1898), 182.

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certainly not a common stone, there must be *mana* in it. So he argues with himself, and he puts it to the proof; he lays it at the root of a tree to the fruit of which it has a certain resemblance, or he buries it in the ground when he plants his garden; an abundant crop on the tree or in the garden shows that he is right, the stone is *mana*, has that power in it.”¹ Here, however, we have at all events the germs of our formal antithesis between the natural and the supernatural; which, by the way, is perhaps not so nicely suited to the taste of the advanced theology of our day that it would have much scruple about dedicating the expression to the service of rudimentary religion. I should like to add that in any case the English word “supernatural” seems to suit this context better than the word “sacred.” *L'idée du sacré* may be apposite enough in French, since *sacré* can stand either for “holy” or for “damned”; but it is an abuse of the English language to speak of the “sacredness” of some accursed wizard. Hence, if our science were to take over the phrase, it must turn its back on usage in favour of etymology; and then, I think, it would be found that the Latin *sacer* merely amounts to *tabu*, the negative mode of the supernatural—a point to which I now proceed.

¹ Codrington, *op. cit.*, 119.

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Tabu, as I have tried to prove elsewhere, is the negative mode of the supernatural, to which *mana* corresponds as the positive mode. I am not confining my attention to the use of these terms in the Pacific region,¹ but am considering them as transformed, on the strength of their local use, into categories of world-wide application. Given the supernatural in any form there are always two things to note about it: firstly, that you are to be heedful in regard to it; secondly, that it has power. The first may be called its negative character, the second its positive. Perhaps stronger expressions might seem to be required. *Tabu*, it might be argued, is not so much negative as prohibitive or even minatory; whilst *mana* is not merely positive but operative and thaumaturgic. The more colourless terms, however, are safer when it is a question of characterising universal modes of the supernatural. Given this wide sense *tabu* simply implies that you must be heedful in regard to the supernatural, not that you must be on your guard

¹ Indeed, in Melanesia at all events, *rongo* answers more nearly to the purpose than does *tambu* (= *tabu*), since the latter always implies human sanction and prohibition. A place may, in fact, be *tambu* without being *rongo*, as when a secret society taboos the approaches to its lodge by means of certain marks, which are quite effectual as representing the physical force commanded by the association. So Codrington, *op. cit.*, 77. Surely, however, every secret society possesses, or originally possessed, a quasi-religious character, and as such would have *mana* at its disposal.

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against it. The prohibition to have dealings with it is not absolute; otherwise practical religion would be impossible. The warning is against casual, incautious, profane dealings. "Not to be lightly approached" is Codrington's translation for the corresponding term used in the New Hebrides.¹ Under certain conditions man may draw nigh, but it is well for him to respect those conditions. Thus "prohibitive" and "minatory" are too strong. *Tabu*, as popularly used, may in a given context connote something like absolute prohibition, but in the universal application I have given to it can only represent the supernatural in its negative character—the supernatural, so to speak, on the defensive.

We come now to *mana*. Here, again, we must shun descriptions that are too specific. *Mana* is often operative and thaumaturgic, but not always. Like energy, *mana* may be dormant or potential. *Mana*, let us remember, is an adjective as well as a noun, expressing a possession which is likewise a permanent quality. The stone that looks like a banana is and has *mana*, whether you set it working by planting it at the foot of your tree or not. Hence it seems enough to say that *mana* exhibits the supernatural in its positive

¹ Codrington, *op. cit.*, 188; cf. 181.

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capacity—ready, but not necessarily in act, to strike.

At this point an important consideration calls for notice. *Tabu* and *mana* apply to the supernatural solely as viewed in what I should like to call its first, or existential, dimension. With its second, or moral, dimension they have nothing to do whatever. They register judgments of fact, as philosophers would say, not judgments of value; they are constitutive categories, not normative. Thus whatever is supernatural is indifferently *tabu*—perilous to the unwary; but as such it may equally well be holy or unclean, set apart for God or abandoned to devil, sainted or sinful, cloistered or quarantined. There is plenty of linguistic evidence to show that such distinctions of value are familiar to the savage mind. Nor is it hard to see how they arise naturally out of the *tabu* idea. Thus in Melanesia everything supernatural is at once *tambu* and *rongo*, words implying that it is fenced round by sanctions human and divine; but there is a stronger term *buto* meaning that the sanctions are specially dreadful and thereupon becoming equivalent to “abominable,”¹ where we seem to pass without a break from degree of intensity to degree of worth. Passing on to

¹ Codrington, *op. cit.*, 31.

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mana, we find exactly the same absence of moral significance. The mystic potentiality is alike for good and evil. Take, for example, two Samoan phrases found side by side in Tregear's dictionary:¹ *fa'a-mana*, to show extraordinary power or energy, as in healing; *fa'a-manamana*, to attribute an accident or misfortune to supernatural powers. Or again, in Melanesia European medicine is called *pei mana*, but on the other hand there is likewise *mana* in the poisoned arrow.² Similarly, *orenda* is power to bless or to curse; and the same holds good of a host of similar native expressions, for instance, *wakan*, *qube*, *manitu*, *oki*, not to go outside North America. Meanwhile, in this direction also moral valuations soon make themselves felt. Thus in the Pacific region we have plenty of special words for witchcraft; and in Maori mythology we even hear of a personified witchcraft *Makutu* dwelling with the wicked goddess *Miru*, of whom Tregear writes: "the unclean *tapu* was her power (*mana*)."³ Or again, in Huron there is a word *otgon* denoting specifically the malign and destructive exercise of *orenda*; and Hewitt notes the curious fact that the former term is gradually displacing the latter—as if, he observes, the bad

¹ Tregear, s.v. *mana*.

² Codrington, *op. cit.*, 198, 308.

³ Tregear, s.vv. *Makutu*, *Miru*.

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rather than the good manifestations of supernatural power produced a lasting impression on the native mind.¹ Elsewhere I have given Australian examples of a similar distinction drawn between wonder-working power in general, and a specifically noxious variety of the same, such as, for instance, the well-known *arungquiltha* of the Arunta.

I have said enough, I trust, to show that there exists, deep-engrained in the rudimentary thought of the world, a conception of a specific aspect common to all sorts of things and living beings, under which they appear at once as needing insulation and as endowed with an energy of high, since extraordinary, potential,—all this without any reference to the bearing of these facts on human welfare. In this connection I would merely add that our stock antithesis between magic and religion becomes applicable only when we pass from this to the second or moral dimension of the supernatural. Presented in its double character of *tabu* and *mana* the supernatural is not moral or immoral, but simply unmoral. It is convenient to describe its sphere as that of the magico-religious; but strictly speaking it is that which is neither magical nor religious, since

¹ J. N. B. Hewitt, *The American Anthropologist* (1902), N.S. iv., 37 n.

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these terms of valuation have yet to be super-induced. I am aware that the normative function of these expressions is not always manifest, that it is permissible to speak of false religion, white magic, and so on. But, for scientific purposes at anyrate, an evaluatory use ought, I think, to be assigned to this historic disjunction, not merely in view of the usage of civilised society, but as a consequence of that tendency to mark off by discriminative epithets the good and the bad supernaturalisms, the kingdoms of God and of the Devil, which runs right through the hierological language of the world.

The rest of this paper will be concerned with a more perplexing, and hence, probably, more controversial, side of the subject. Put in a nutshell the problem is the following: How does "animism" fit into the scheme? Is the supernatural identical with the spiritual, and is *mana* nothing more or less than spiritual power? Or, on the contrary, are *mana* and "soul" or "spirit" categories that belong to relatively distinct systems of ideas—do the two refuse to combine?

As regards this latter question, our minds may quickly be set at rest. Somehow these categories do manage to combine freely, and notably in that very Pacific region where *mana* is at home. The

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Melanesian evidence collected by Codrington is decisive. Wherever *mana* is found—and that is to say, wherever the supernatural reveals itself—this *mana* is referred to one of three originating sources, namely, a living man, a dead man's ghost, or a "spirit"; spirits displaying one of two forms, that of a ghostlike appearance—as a native put it, "something indistinct, with no definite outline, grey like dust, vanishing as soon as looked at"¹—or that of the ordinary corporeal figure of a man. Other manifestations of the supernatural are explained in terms of these three, or rather the last two, agencies. A sacred animal, or again, a sacred stone, is one which belongs to a ghost or spirit, or in which a ghost or spirit resides.² Can we say, then, that "animism" is in complete possession of the field? With a little stretching of the term, I think, we can. Ghosts and spirits of ghostlike form are obviously animistic to the core. Supernatural beings of human and corporeal form may perhaps be reckoned by courtesy as spirits; though really we have here the rudiments of a distinct and alternative development, namely anthropomorphic theism, a mode of conception that especially appeals to the mythological fancy. Finally, animism can

¹ Codrington, *op. cit.*, 151.

² *Ib.*, 178 *sqq.*

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be made without much trouble to cover the case of the living man with *mana*. If a man has *mana*, it resides in his "spiritual part"¹ or "soul," which after his death becomes a ghost. Besides, it appears, no man has this power of himself; you can say that he has *mana* with the use of the substantive, not that he is *mana*, as you can say of a ghost or spirit. This latter "puts the *mana* into the man" (*manag*—a causative verb) or "inspires" him; and an inspired man will even in speaking of himself say not "I" but "we two."² There seems, however, to be a certain flaw in the native logic, involving what comes perilously near to argument in a circle. Not every man has *mana*, nor every ghost;³ but the soul of a man of power becomes as such a ghost of power, though in his capacity of ghost he has it in greater force than when alive.⁴ On the ground of this capacity for earning, if not enjoying, during life the right to be *mana*, I have ventured provisionally to class the living man with the ghost, and the spirit as an independent owner of *mana*; but it is clear that, in defiance of logic, animism has contrived to "jump the claim."

¹ Codrington, *op. cit.*, 191.

² *Ib.*, 191, 210, 153.

³ Codrington, *op. cit.*, 119, 125, 258; but 176 shows that even the burying-places of common people are so far sacred that no one will go there without due cause.

⁴ *Ib.*, 258.

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Having thus shown in the briefest way that *mana* and "animism" can occur in combination, I proceed to the awkward task of determining how, if treated as categories applicable to rudimentary religion in general, they are to be provided each with a classificatory function of its own. Perhaps the simplest way of meeting, or rather avoiding, the difficulty is to deny that "animism" is a category that belongs intrinsically to our science at all. Certainly it might be said to pertain more properly to some interest wider than the magico-religious, call it rudimentary philosophy or what we will. It makes no difference whether we take animism in the vaguer Spencerian sense of the attribution of life and animation—an attitude of mind to which I prefer to give the distinguishing name of "animatism"—or in the more exact Tylorian sense of the attribution of soul, ghost, or ghost-like spirit. In either case we are carried far beyond the bounds of rudimentary religion, even when magic is made co-partner in the system. There is obviously nothing in the least supernatural in being merely alive. On the other hand, to have soul is, as we have seen, not necessarily to have *mana* here or hereafter. The rudimentary philosophy of Melanesia abounds in nice distinctions of an animistic kind as follows.

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A yam lives without intelligence, and therefore has no *tarunga* or "soul." A pig has a *tarunga* and so likewise has a man, but with this difference that when a pig dies he has no *tindalo* or "ghost," but a man's *tarunga* at his death becomes a *tindalo*. Even so, however, only a great man's *tarunga* becomes a *tindalo* with *mana*, a "ghost of worship," as Codrington renders it. Meanwhile, as regards a *vui* or "spirit," its nature is apparently the same as that of a soul or at anyrate a human soul, but it is never without *mana*.¹ Thus only the higher grades of this animistic hierarchy rank as supernatural beings; and you know them for what they are not by their soul-like nature, but by the *mana* that is in them.

It remains to add that *mana* can come very near to meaning "soul" or "spirit," though without the connotation of wraith-like appearance. Tregear supplies abundant evidence from Polynesia.² *Mana* from meaning indwelling power naturally passes into the sense of "intelligence," "energy of character," "spirit"; and the kindred term *manawa* (*manava*) expresses "heart," "the interior man," "conscience," "soul"; whilst various other compounds of *mana* between them yield

¹ Codrington, *op. cit.*, 249; cf. 123-6.

² Tregear, *op. cit.*, s.vv. *mana*, *manawa*.

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a most complete psychological vocabulary—words for thought, memory, belief, approval, affection, desire, and so forth. Meanwhile, *mana* always, I think, falls short of expressing “individuality.” Though immaterial it is perfectly transmissible. Thus only last week a correspondent wrote to me from Simbo in the Solomon Islands to say that a native has no objection to imparting to you the words of a *mana* song. The mere knowledge will not enable you to perform miracles. You must pay him money, and then *ipso facto* he will transmit the *mana* to you—as we should say, the “goodwill” of the concern. On the other hand, animism lends itself naturally to this purpose. It is true that there is often very little individuality attaching to the nameless spirit (*vui*) that may enter into a man. But the ghost (*tindalo*) that inspires you is apt to retain its full selfhood, so that the possessed one speaks of “we two—So-and-so and I.”

I conclude, then, that *mana*, or rather the *tabu-mana* formula, has solid advantages over animism, when the avowed object is to found what Dr. Tylor calls “a minimum definition of religion.” *Mana* is coextensive with the supernatural; animism is far too wide. *Mana* is always *mana*, supernatural power, differing in intensity—in

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voltage, so to speak—but never in essence; animism splits up into more or less irreducible kinds, notably “soul,” spirit,” and “ghost.” Finally, *mana*, whilst fully adapted to express the immaterial—the unseen force at work behind the seen—yet, conformably with the incoherent state of rudimentary reflection, leaves in solution the distinction between personal and impersonal, and in particular does not allow any notion of a high individuality to be precipitated. Animism, on the other hand, tends to lose touch with the supernatural in its more impersonal forms, and is not well suited to express its transmissibility nor indeed its immateriality; but, by way of compensation, it can in a specialised form become a means of representing supernatural agents of high individuality, whenever the social condition of mankind is advanced enough to foster such a conception.

This last consideration paves the way for a concluding observation. Throughout I have been in search of classificatory categories applicable to rudimentary religion as a whole. In other words, I have assumed that the subject is to be treated as if it represented a single level of experience, and, moreover, that the treatment is to limit itself to the work of classifying—that is,

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arranging the facts under synoptic headings. Now such, I think, must be the prime object of our science at its present stage of development. We must not try to move too fast. Some day, however, when our knowledge is fuller and better organised, we may hope to be able to deal with the history of religion genetically—to exhibit the successive stages of a continuous process of orthogenic or central evolution, whilst making at the same time full allowance for the thousand and one side-shoots of the wide-spreading family-tree of human culture. Now when it comes to exhibiting genesis, it may well be, I think, that, along certain lines of growth, and perhaps along the central line itself, *mana* will at a certain point have to give way to one or another type of animistic conception. Where marked individualities tend to be lacking in society, as in Australia, there it will be found that the supernatural tends normally to be apprehended under more or less impersonal forms. This holds true even within the strict *habitat* of the *mana* doctrine. Thus in the New Hebrides, where the culture is relatively backward, the prevailing animistic conception is that of the *vui* or “spirit,” a being often nameless, and, at the best, of vague personality. On the other hand, in the Solomon Islands, where the

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culture is more advanced, the religious interest centres in the *tindalo mana* or ghost of power—the departed soul of some well-known individual.¹ In effect, hero-worship has, with the evolution of the hero, superinduced itself upon some sort of polydaemonism redolent of democracy. But I refrain from further speculations about religious evolution. They are tempting, but, in the present state of our knowledge, hardly edifying. I would merely add, glancing forwards for a moment from rudimentary religion to what we call “advanced,” that to the end animism never manages to drive the more impersonal conceptions of the supernatural clean out of the field. The “ghost,” clearly, does not hold its own for long. Anthropomorphic theism, on the other hand, a view that is bred from animatism rather than from animism proper, dominates many of the higher creeds, but not all. Buddhism is a standing example of an advanced type of religion that exalts the impersonal aspect of the divine. It is, again, especially noticeable how a thinker such as Plato, with all his interest in soul, human personality, and the subjective in general, hesitates between a personal and an impersonal rendering of the idea of God. Thus the ambiguity that lies sleep-

¹ Codrington, *op. cit.*, 122.

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ing in *mana* would seem to persist to some extent even when religious experience is at its most self-conscious. In the meantime all religions, low and high, rudimentary and advanced, can join in saying with the Psalmist that "power belongeth unto God."

A SOCIOLOGICAL VIEW OF COM- PARATIVE RELIGION

I. *Comparative Religion as a branch of Psychology.*

ALTHOUGH anthropologists of the British school have on the whole troubled little to make explicit to their readers or even to themselves the precise method of their researches in Comparative Religion, there is no doubt that one and all, if challenged, would declare that method to be, broadly speaking, psychological. In other words, they would profess to be trying to understand the religious consciousness, or religious experience, of mankind "from the inside," as the phrase is. Treating ritual, language, organisation, and so on, as but the "outward signs" of an "inward and spiritual" condition, they seek to penetrate, they would say, beyond and beneath these phenomena, by the only available, if indirect, means, namely the exercise of sympathetic insight, to those subjective factors of which the objective manifestations form the more or less loose-fitting garment. Further—though here

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might be found a greater divergence of opinion—religious experience would be characterised by most thinkers of this school as pre-eminently of the practical rather than of the speculative or mystic type, a mode of the life of purpose and action rather than of the life of thought or faith. After all, considering the national tendency to emphasise the ethical side of Christianity, it is not surprising that the scientific conception of religion should echo this pragmatic tone.

Does the rest of the world agree with the British school in regarding psychological and subjective elements as fundamental in religious history? Of course no one in their senses—not even a theorist defending a thesis—would deny that subjective elements are there to be taken stock of, or that, when taken stock of, they have a certain value in revealing ultimate conditions. But a profound distrust of the subjective as providing altogether too shifting a base for the philosophy of the human sciences exists both here and abroad. Indeed, if British anthropologists (from amongst whom Spencer may for our present purpose be excluded as founder of a distinct school of his own) have acquiesced in purely psychological results, might not the reason be that, busy with their beloved facts, they have

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not troubled to look beyond the ends of their noses? Hence, both here amongst admirers of the Synthetic Philosophy, and abroad where system is more of a cult, determined efforts of all sorts have been made to reduce the psychological to its presumed non-psychological and objective conditions. Sociological or historical method in general rather than the method of Comparative Religion in particular has naturally furnished the immediate topic of most pronouncements. Yet it would be easy to show that Comparative Religion no less than any other of the special departments of Social Science has been seriously affected by this and that attempt to refer the will and fancy of man to causes that transcend the arbitrary.

To enumerate and classify the multitude of these objectivist theories is too formidable a task to be attempted here, but some representative views may be cited by way of illustrating, and at the same time criticising, their general tendency. First we have the evolutionism of the biological school with its organicist or even mechanist analogies, which applied wholesale and unconditionally to Sociology have notoriously begotten a mythology. When all has been said in favour of the suggestiveness of the ideas of such writers as Novicow or Espinas, it remains certain that

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sociological phenomena belong primarily to a plane distinct from that of instinct, and admit of specific explanation in terms not heterogeneous but appropriate. No doubt there are remoter conditions of a biological order that have a certain relevancy. To exalt these, however, at the expense of proximate conditions, as this school is led by its *a priori* bias to do, is gratuitously to hamper observation and description with a radically false perspective. Closely associated with the line of thought is the view of such thinkers as Lapouge and Ammon, who make race the dominant factor in human development—a notion which seems likewise to underlie the somewhat different work of Gumpłowicz. But, strictly taken, race is the vaguest and most elusive of conceptions, as any physical anthropologist is perfectly ready to admit.¹ The races of mankind, it is plain, are a thoroughly mixed lot. If on the other hand race be taken loosely in the sense of nationality, it is clear that analysis has not yet said its last word. In another category are the economic interpretations of Loria and others, this type of theory deriving itself from the “historical materialism” of Marx. Distinct, but

¹ Compare, for instance, P. Topinard, *Éléments d'anthropologie générale* (1885), p. 202.

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of very similar tendency, is the anthropogeography of Ratzel and his school, a method that is rapidly gaining ground in this country. Now regarded in themselves such studies, whether of food supply, or of soil or climate, in relation to distribution of population and other objective matters, are highly important, nay indispensable. National character and policy are certainly not to be understood apart from the consideration of environing conditions of this kind. It is only when, or so far as, they are taken to explain the national history to all intents and purposes finally, *milieu* or some prominent aspect thereof being regarded as the determining cause of genius itself, that no soundly empirical and tentative philosophy of man can bear with them any longer. The trouble with all these theories we have reviewed is their apriorism. It is assumed offhand firstly, that for all the manifestations of mind, individual and collective, there must be an explanation in terms of necessary causation of a physical and external type; secondly, that some one cause must be more fundamental than the rest, and must therefore be capable of accepting responsibility, as it were, for the whole affair. But these are but prejudices, begotten it may be by a passion for the objective, but nevertheless deserving the

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denomination of subjectivist at its most abusive. As empiricists we must work, not from metaphysical fancies, but from facts—from that which, as Aristotle puts it, is “better known to us.”

A defender of these views will retort: “But granting you that instinct and race are somewhat intangible, here in food-supply or soil are the very facts you profess to be after. Surely they are ‘better known to us,’ because directly presented to the senses, than the accompanying subjective states that sympathetic insight must indirectly divine.” To this the reply is that undoubtedly they are directly presented to us as facts; but not as causes. Description may well begin from them; it does not follow that explanation will end with them. We begin, let us say, by describing in objective terms the proportion borne by the agricultural to the manufacturing portion of the population in this country, or its position as a group of islands set over against a continent. Is it possible for explanation to deduce therefrom without further ado the amount of corn we import or the size of our battle fleet? If this seem possible to some, it is only because the middleterm, a fact of another order, a psychical fact, namely the national desire for self-preserva-

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tion, is tacitly assumed as a constant factor in the situation. But nations make mistakes. They are capable of ignoring or at least misconceiving the dictates of self-preservation. The "free fooders" and the "blue-water school" do not have it all their own way. But what becomes then of the "laws" supposed objectively and necessarily to connect preponderance of manufacturing population with the importation of grain, or insular position with the command of the sea? They turn out to be but laws of the moral type, laws which ought to be kept if certain ends are to be realised, but which actually are broken as often as these ends are not affirmed by the general will. In short, if we are not composing in the slap-dash style of evolutionary biology some *a priori* science of national health in general, but are seeking empirically to describe in their detailed relations to each other the actual conditions under which the historical life of peoples is carried on, psychical factors must not only be considered, but specially emphasised. For the peoples concerned, and therefore for the observer, the psychical factors—this sentiment, that policy, and so on—underlie and condition the material factors. If more remotely the psychical factors be themselves conditioned, it is certainly not by the material factors

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as directly presented either to the observer or to those he is observing, but by certain transcendent causes somehow discerned by the metaphysician at the back of these factors. We may add that we have represented the case for objective determinants of an economic and geographical kind at its strongest, namely where, as when food or defence from foes is in question, the psychical accompaniments are relatively simple and constant. Where art or religion have to be accounted for, material explanations at once become palpably incomplete and arbitrary. It is true that we have gone for our illustration to a civilised nation where sentiments and policies are clearly in evidence. But the primitive tribe has its sentiments and even its policies likewise. That they are harder to discover does not confer the right to treat them as directly deducible from *milieu*.

There remains to be considered another group of sociologists, the school of Durkheim and his brilliant colleagues of *L'Année Sociologique*. These thinkers are, or tend to be, objectivist, but theirs is a psychological not a materialistic objectivism. Their explanations are framed in terms of idea, sentiment, and purpose, which is the all-important matter. So long as they do not force the psychology to suit their metaphysical postulate of

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determinism—and they show no strong inclination to do that, a test-case being their handling of the association of ideas on sound apperceptionist principles—there can be no harm in believing, with at least half the psychological world, that ultimately the subjective and objective orders are at one in a cause-bound necessary series or system of correlated realities. If they admit the phenomenal existence of the contingent in the shape of human purpose, they are welcome to disbelieve in its real existence, whatever that may mean. Their merit is that they go straight to the facts, objective and subjective, of human life as directly or indirectly observed, philosophising as to principles of explanation as they go, that is, as the principles are demanded by the actual work of specific and detailed research. With these, therefore, the British school of anthropology, with its radical empiricism that puts facts before laws and is happy if it can see a stride-length ahead in the dark, has no quarrel; nay from them it has much to learn. What this school names *Morphologie Sociale*, the study of the exterior conditions and forms of social agglomeration, of all in short that a statistical demography should describe, is a branch of investigation to which more attention might well be paid on this side of the Channel,

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as witness sundry gaps in the *questionnaires* our anthropologists are wont to circulate among workers in the field.¹ But you may have too much of a good thing, if the other good things of life are for its sake neglected. There are certain signs that Psychology may in the long run suffer from one-sided explanations of morphological derivation. Thus that most able and thorough-going of anthropological researchers, M. Mauss, in his *Essai sur les variations saisonnières des Sociétés Eskimos*² goes so far as to claim that he has here verified crucially,³ the hypothesis that all the forms, including the religious form, of the social life of the Eskimo are a function of its material substrate, namely the mass, density, organisation, and composition of their modes of agglomeration. All he shows, however, is that, if the mode of agglomeration changes, the religious custom and so on does as a fact alter. Just so in the case of the individual, as the brain-matter is modified, the ideas appear to change; but surely it does not follow necessarily that thought is a function of the brain, if this is to mean that thought is the effect, or even the unconditional correlate, of cerebration. Yet if it mean less than this,

¹ Cf. *L'Année Sociologique*, ix., 138.

³ *Ib.*, p. 129.

² *Ib.*, 39 *sqq.*

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and unknown conditions may possibly vitiate the correspondence, explanation is not reached, since we are left with the merely analogical. A similar tendency would seem to be the stress laid by the school of Durkheim on the objectivity of their method—on the fact that throughout they are dealing with “things.” They appear to regard social phenomena, whether morphological or psychological, as objective simply in the sense of independent of individual control. Now no doubt the individual often finds himself powerless in face of the mass, though the mass is probably in every case moved by its ringleaders. No doubt, again, the subconscious nature of most popular contagions favours a treatment which verges on a mechanist dynamic. But do these writers mean more than that in a certain abstract aspect of society mechanism, or something psychologically equivalent, prevails? Probably not. But they at least show no wish or power (happily for those who have profited largely from their researches) to limit their science to the study of this abstract element and its conditions—a bare fragment at most, suppose it *per impossibile* isolated, of the vast mass of sociological material calling for analysis. The truth would seem to be that these thinkers, in reacting against the ideological con-

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structions of the fancy-free anthropologist—a pretender who is fast being hustled from the field even in this land of distinguished amateurs—have bent the stick over to the other side. By all means let us avoid what Bacon calls *anticipatio* as contrasted with *interpretatio naturae*—the flying to the widest axioms without progressively graduated research. But at least let Psychology as Psychology preserve its integrity as a kind of bridge-work between the objective and the subjective elements of our experience. Let no premature abstraction cut up the field into strips before the whole has been surveyed. One day, perhaps, social explanations may be assimilated to mechanical; or one day, as I incline to hope, the very opposite may come about. In the meantime, however, whilst so much observation remains to be accomplished, let metaphysical questions, so far as they do not immediately bear on the exigencies of practical procedure, remain open. In particular, let necessity and contingency be treated as complementary, though antithetic, bases of explanatory construction in dealing with a human experience that, in despite of logic, empirically faces both ways at once and together.

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II. *Comparative Religion as a branch of Social Psychology.*

There seems, then, to be good reason to respect the British tradition which ordains that Psychology must preside over the investigations of Comparative Religion. It remains to make explicit what anthropologists of the British school have hitherto recognised but vaguely, that a Social, not an Individual, Psychology can alone be invested with this function.

The ordinary Psychology bases itself on the assumption that this soul of yours or mine is something individual. There can be no great harm in this if individual here mean no more than self-complete. What is fatal, however, is to take it—as is often done by inadvertence—in the sense of self-contained. It is absolutely necessary to assume with common sense that souls can communicate—by indirect means, let us say, putting aside the question of the possibility of telepathy—and that by communicating they become more or less complementary to one another in a social system. For certain limited purposes, however, Psychology has found it convenient to make abstraction of the social dimension, as it may be termed. In so doing it can never afford

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for a moment to forget that it is dealing with what, being highly abstract, it is safest to term a fiction—to wit, a soul stripped of ninety-nine hundredths of its natural portion of soul-life. Herodotus¹ tells how King Psammetichus of Egypt caused certain infants to be isolated and in their inarticulate babbling sought for the original tongue of man, with results more satisfying to himself than to a critical posterity. Such an incubator-method, as it may be termed, is by no means to be despised in certain psychological contexts. As is well known, the instincts of newborn animals have been distinguished by precisely this means. So, too, in a somewhat similar if less exact way the psychologist who merely observes having made abstraction of the pabulum provided by society together with such effects on the mental digestion as may be traced to the particular nature of the food, may pay exclusive attention to the digestive apparatus which the individual is supposed to bring with him to the feast. But apply this incubator-method to the origins of language, of law, of morals, of religion, and how is the fallacy of Psammetichus to be escaped? Yet on all sides this application is being made. To take but the case in which we

¹ Herodotus, ii., 2.

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are primarily interested, namely that of religion, what is commoner, than to imagine a religious instinct, inherent in our individual nature, that out of itself by a sort of partheno-genesis bears fruit in the shape of historical religion? Or if the stimulus to religion is thought of as coming not so much from within as from without, from God by revelation, or from the world by the awakening of awe at its marvels, it is still the self-sufficient individual who is thought of as the subject of the experience. An example from a neighbouring field is the claim of various anthropologists to be able to deduce the phenomena of magic from the laws of association as they work in the individual mind. And yet that very incubator-method which is here parodied and abused might have taught these all too simple theorists their mistake. We cannot, perhaps, isolate an infant after the example of Psammetichus, and watch to see whether *proprio motu* it not merely talks but prays. We might, however, transplant the infant from savage to civilised surroundings, or, for the matter of that, might reverse the process. With what result? Would a young totemist notwithstanding evolve in the one case and a young Christian in the other? Or would not the child acquire the religion of its adopted home, of the

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society that rears and educates it? Even when full allowance is made for the fact that each child reacts on its education in individual fashion, can there be the slightest shadow of a doubt that the supreme determining influence must rest with the social factor?

If religion, then, is pre-eminently the concern of a Social, and not an Individual, Psychology, in what sort of shape will its natural laws or tendencies be exhibited? It has just been pointed out that a religion is so closely bound up with a particular organisation of society that to abandon the one is to break with the other. May we, therefore, go further and say that a religion is identical with a particular organisation of society, that it is a social institution? Certainly not, unless we are speaking loosely. We must say that the religion is materialised, incorporated, enshrined, in the corresponding institution or group of institutions. Perhaps an analogy may be drawn (though analogies are always dangerous if pressed) between a religion embodied in a social structure and a piece of literature, the work of many hands, consigned to a manuscript. In either case the one depends for very existence on the other, yet they differ as spirit from outer form; and the spirit is to a greater or less extent

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functionally independent of the form, since often it palpably governs it, stamps it with its own pattern, makes it the instrument of its own intent. Bad literature, indeed, will conform itself to the manuscript; just so many pages are wanted; the scribe must not be troubled to rewrite. And so bad religion enslaves itself to the outer form, truckles to a usage that imposes bounds, becomes fossilised to suit its ministers' convenience. Judged by which test, it must be admitted, there is a vast amount of bad religion in existence. Nevertheless world-literature and world-religion at their best and most typical are by no means the hacks of publishers and priests. In view, then, of the functional independence of the spirit, that is, the ruling meaning and purpose, of historical religion at its most essential, its laws or tendencies must be described in terms appropriate to spirit, in terms of meaning and purpose. A Social, no less than an Individual, Psychology is concerned, primarily and directly, with soul only.

But at once the question occurs: Whose soul? Whose spirit? Whose meaning and purpose? For those who recognise the possibility of a Social Psychology, there can be but one answer. Primarily and directly, the subject, the owner as it were, of religious experience is the religious

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society, not the individual. Now the subject of psychical states and processes as conceived by Individual Psychology is in no small measure abstract and fictitious; and there is no harm in this abstraction so long as Individual Psychology knows what it is about and does not claim substance for its shadow-pictures. It remains to add, in fairness, that Social Psychology too has to operate on a figment—a figment which it is the business of Sociology to exhibit in its true nature, namely, as a methodological device of an abstract kind. Suppose we wish to explain the totemism of an Australian tribe. There is only one possible way to do this appropriately and essentially, namely to describe its general meaning and purpose by means of what Seignobos would call a *formule d'ensemble*.¹ Do we thereby commit ourselves to the assertion that this meaning and purpose exist? Most certainly yes in a sense. For whom, then, do they exist in this sense? Not for the individual tribesman taken at random, nor even for a leading elder, but for the society as a whole. It is absolutely necessary, if we would avoid the psychologist's fallacy, the mistake of letting our own feelings mix with what has to be impersonally

¹ Cf. Langlois et Seignobos, *Introduction aux études historiques*, 1898, p. 244.

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observed, that we should fix our eyes throughout on the meaning and purpose totemism has, not for us, but for them, and for them not as so many individuals but as a group. Totemism is one of those psychical effects of intercourse which are methodologically, that is, for the working purposes of our science, specific. In terming such effects specific, however, Empirical Psychology implies no more than that they feel, think, and act in society otherwise than if apart, in a degree and to an extent deserving careful discrimination. It does not pronounce, because it has no methodological interest in pronouncing, on the metaphysical question whether, as common sense inclines to hold, a society as such has no self-contained unitary soul, or, as Green and Bosanquet would affirm, the general will belongs to a collective soul of another and higher power than this soul of yours or mine.

Social Psychology, then, would appear to be immediately concerned with the soul-life of this abstraction or figment, the social subject. It is the business, however, of Sociology, understood as the general philosophy of the social sciences, in which capacity its concern is with method rather than results, to remind Social Psychology of the abstract and conditional nature of its

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findings; since it is notorious that in science one is apt to hug one's pet abstraction so devotedly that one's fool's paradise comes in the end to be mistaken for the real world. Sociology, therefore, will do well to insist that, in dealing with such a subject as religion in the concrete variety of its historical manifestations, Social Psychology should qualify its results by making allowance for those of an applied form of Individual Psychology on the one hand, and for those of Social Morphology on the other.

Thus in the first place, though its interest is primarily in the social subject, Social Psychology must never for an instant ignore the qualifying fact of the existence of the individual subject. We should be very far from the truth were we to suppose that the savage society as such assigns any consistent meaning and purpose to its totemism, or, for the matter of that, were we to impute consistency of view and intention to the most intelligent and organic religious society the world has ever known. Souls communicate, but always imperfectly. They are always more or less at cross-purposes and cross-meanings. It is well to remember this when we feel inclined to deify society, the collective intelligence, the public conscience, the spirit of the age, and the like.

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Objectively viewed, no doubt, society dwarfs the individual, such is the impressiveness of its sheer mass and momentum. Subjectively considered, however, society compares badly with the best individuals. The social mind is not merely hazy but even distraught, whether we look at it in its lowest manifestation, the mob, or in its highest, namely the state. At its best it is the mind of a public meeting, at its worst it is the mind of Babel. It is pointless to retort that society is always right. Society is always actually right (until physical catastrophe occurs), in the sense that whatever happens happens. But it does not know and will the ideally right, the right that is not actual but to-be-actualised, to anything like the same extent as do the best individuals. So much is this the case that the historian of civilisation, when he seeks to render the inwardness of some development or movement, will be tempted to abandon the strictly social standpoint for another which may be termed the standpoint of the representative individual. Thus how describe the spirit of the French Revolution? Socially, it is a seething mass of cross-currents. In a representative individual, say Rousseau, at least we can distinguish the general set of the tide. At the level of primitive culture, however,

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where representative individuals are not easily met with, where, to our eyes at least, one man is very like another, the social method, the method of the composite photograph, may and must have the preference. Yet social Psychology cannot afford to forget that the individual members of a primitive society find it extremely hard to communicate successfully with each other, to understand what they are severally or together after. Hence there is a danger of ascribing a psychical tendency to a social movement where there is none. The very word tendency is ambiguous. It may stand for a drifting together, which is physical, or for a pursuing or at least a groping together, which is psychical. The latter kind of tendency is the only one that concerns a Social Psychology as such. If therefore the collective mind of a savage society is asserted to mean and purpose this or that, proof must be forthcoming that there actually is something of a mutual understanding to this or that effect; and it will always be wise to make allowance for the possibility of alternative interpretations in regard to even the most firmly rooted custom, as well as for the possibility of interference on the part of that bugbear of Social Science, the individual who has a view of his own.

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A second qualifying circumstance to be constantly borne in mind when working from the notion of a social subject or collective mind is one that is likely to appeal more strongly than the other to those who are in sympathy with Continental sociology. This is the fact already alluded to that social meanings and purposes exist mainly as embodied in social institutions. We have claimed for the former at their best and most typical a certain functional independence that entitles them to be dealt with as phenomena essentially psychical. At the same time this independence, it is clear, can never be absolute; whilst often it is purely titular, the form, a thing in itself wholly soulless and material, ruling in the place of the spirit. Moreover, religion in particular would seem of all the spiritual activities of man the most subservient to form; ritual is religion's second nature. Hence a Social Psychology must beware lest in religion or elsewhere it pretend to find living purpose where there is none or next to none. The organism may be lying dead in its shell. Or, as is the commoner case, whilst the shell persists intact, the original owner may have disappeared, and in its place another more or less inappropriate and alien tenant have crept in, to the confusion of honest naturalists unpractised

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in detecting sports. Nay, to pursue the metaphor, the empty shell may harbour quite a crowd of such casual immigrants. Bad religion is quite capable of saying: This is what you must all do; but each may think as he likes. Now it is perhaps the most characteristic feature of civilisation that it encourages the free meaning, giving it the power to dispense, not indeed with form altogether, but with this or that form whenever it is found to hamper. But primitive culture is form-bound through and through. A proof is the extreme difficulty with which ideas travel from tribe to tribe. So integrally are they embodied in the tribal customs that apart from those customs they are but empty ineffectual ghosts of themselves. No wonder that many a sociologist says in his haste that they are the customs, neither more nor less. But Social Morphology cannot rightfully thus supersede Social Psychology any more than grammar can supersede logic. Yet Social Psychology must work with Social Morphology ever at its elbow. Let us remember that social purposing has a psychical nature of a very low order, especially when, as at the level of savagery, it is not continuously fed by contributions from the minds of enlightened individuals. The policy of an enlightened individual may be

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said to start from some more or less definite character, mental disposition, or whatsoever we like to call it. At least we cannot get behind this, however well-informed we may be as to the man's heredity and *milieu*; for us there is in greater or lesser degree spontaneous origination, a fresh cause to be reckoned with. All this is far less true of the action of a society as such. Nevertheless, in a civilised society genuine originators are to be found amongst the prophets and leaders and other representatives of the social tendency to progress, who, apart from their personal contribution to its furtherance, stand as vouchers for the diffused presence in the community at large of the power to originate by conscious and reflective means. Turn, however, to primitive society, and self-caused ideas as moving forces are but rarely to be met with. Instead, we are for the most part thrown back on mental processes of the lowest order—say, Tarde's "cross-fertilisation of imitations," or something equally crepuscular in its psychical quality. Meanwhile, lest we civilised observers lose our way in these regions of mist, there before our eyes stands the rite, objective, persistent, of firm outline; and, however much we desire to psychologise, we are bound to cling to it as our makeshift standard of

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reference. Nor is our convenience the only excuse for working round to spirit by way of form. For the savage society likewise the rite forms a sort of standard of reference. Out of it proceed the random whys; back to it go the indecisive therefores; and at this the common centre the meanings coalesce and grow ever more consistent, so that at last, perhaps, they react as one systematic idea on the supporting custom, and may henceforth rank as an originating psychical force of the higher order. Since, then, it falls to the lot of the social morphologist to describe the rite as externally presented, his ways and those of the social psychologist can never lie far apart at the level of the lower culture. And, even if the latter has a distinct and from the human standpoint a higher task, at least he must check his account of the tendencies of the social mind by constant use of the data provided by his colleague.

To sum up. Comparative Religion is a branch of empirical science which aims at describing in formulæ of the highest generality attainable the historical tendencies of the human mind considered in its religious aspect. Its method will primarily be that of a Social Psychology; since it will work directly from the implied or explicit notion of a social subject, to which the tendencies it describes

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will be held to belong essentially. The use of this method will, however, be qualified throughout by a secondary attention to the methods of two allied disciplines, namely Individual Psychology and Social Morphology. On the one hand, allowance will be made for the effects of the indirectness and imperfection inherent in the communications of the individual members of society with one another, as also for the results of individual initiative. On the other hand, there will be taken into account the influence on sentiments, ideas, and purposes of social forms and institutions in their external character as rallying and transmitting agencies, or again as agencies that fossilise and pervert.

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Native words in italics. Proposed technical terms in inverted commas.

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